

FLK 373 - 700: Folklore and the Media

Instructor: Dr. Kate Horigan (kate.horigan@wku.edu)

Office hours: Monday and Wednesday, 10:00 – 11:30am, FAC 235

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Course Meetings: ONLINE CLASS

Course Description

Modern forms of expression and communication are complex, varying from face-to-face interaction (including most folklore) to standardized mass media (TV, films, CDs, magazines, video games, comics) to electronic forms that can be both personal and global (blogs, video sites, social networking). This course will examine contemporary forms of folklore, popular culture, and mass and electronic media, the ways they interact with each other and we interact with them, the complex ways they shape communication and creativity, ways that folk communities form around mass culture (e.g., fan cultures) and on the internet, and such issues as ideology, corporate or government dominance of the media, representation of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, social class, and other topics. New technologies are constantly changing the ways we communicate and express ourselves, and yet seeming new forms of communication are in many ways extensions of old, folkloric forms that have been around for a very long time.

Folklore and the Media fulfills the requirement for a Connections course (Local to Global) under the Colonnade plan. It will help students to meet this Colonnade education goal: *Students will examine local and global issues within the context of an increasingly interconnected world. Courses will consider the origins and dynamics of a global society, the significance of local phenomena on a global scale, and/or material, cultural, and ethical challenges in today's world.*

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, students will

- understand basic concepts of culture, folklore, popular culture, mass media and new media, and their complex relationships on local, regional, national, and global scales.
- critically examine and analyze ways that folklore influences (and is influenced by) the cultural forms of mass, popular and electronic culture/media, including films and television, music, journalism, and the Internet.
- critically examine and analyze the ways that electronic media becomes a conduit for folklore forms such as rumors, legends, and jokes, spreading them around the world and altering their nature in ways that influence and shape cultures globally and locally.
- critically examine and analyze how rumors, legends, and conspiracy theories about such phenomena as terrorism and immigration influence public opinion, decision-making and policies, on local, national and global levels.

- critically examine and analyze how fan cultures and other folk cultures form and operate around popular and mass cultural phenomena on local and global levels.
- develop the tools for recognizing, examining, analyzing, and researching these phenomena in a critical manner that can be applied to everyday life and to their complex global interrelationships, and will be useful in analyzing cultural phenomena in local, regional, national and global contexts.

Not all folklore is pretty. Please be aware that this class will occasionally deal with folklore that contains obscene language and/or is inflammatory (e.g., racist, sexist, homophobic). We will also deal with folklore that expresses particular political and ideological positions. The intention is not to promote such folklore but to deal in a critical way with the realities of folklore in contemporary culture. It is imperative that all students speak to one other and to me with respect at all times.

Required Texts

All required readings are available on Blackboard or elsewhere online as noted.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

20% Quizzes

10 short quizzes based on readings; all quizzes will be due before midnight on the Friday of the week in which they are assigned.

20% Discussion Board

Participate in 6 discussion forums on Blackboard; for each discussion forum, you must write and share your own post in response to the prompt, and also respond to a classmate's post (for a total of 6 posts and 6 responses); all posts will be due before midnight on the Friday of the week in which they are assigned.

5% Week 1 Check-In

Week 1 Check-In instructions are at the end of the first PowerPoint lecture, titled "What is Folklore?" Your emailed response is due by Friday, 8/30 (11:59pm).

5% Folklore and Film Review

Film Review instructions are at the end of the Week 13 PowerPoint lecture titled "Folklore and Film." Your emailed paper is due by Friday, 11/29 (11:59pm).

25% Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will cover all lectures and readings from the first half of the course, and will consist of a combination of short answer and essay questions. It will be made available online under "Tests & Quizzes" on **Wednesday, 10/9**, for the entire day (from 12:00am until 11:59pm). You will be able to take it at any time on that day, but once you begin you will have to complete it within one 2-hour period.

25% Final Exam

The final exam will cover all lectures and readings from the second half of the course, and will consist of a combination of short answer and essay questions. It will be made available online under "Tests & Quizzes" on **Friday, 12/6** for the entire day (from 12:00am until 11:59pm). You will be able to take it at any time on that day, but once you begin you will have to complete it within one 2-hour period.

Policies & Resources

Academic Integrity: From the WKU Office of Counseling and Student Affairs: “Violations of academic integrity include cheating, plagiarism, or lying about academic matters. Plagiarism is defined as any use of another writer's words, concepts, or sequence of ideas without acknowledging that writer properly. This includes not only direct quotations of another writer's words, but also paraphrases or summaries of another writer's concepts or ideas without acknowledging the writer properly (i.e., citing them). Cheating includes behaviors such as giving or receiving data or information under any circumstances not permitted by the instructor. Lying about academic matters includes falsification of data or information as part of an academic exercise, or knowingly providing false information to a faculty member. Students who have plagiarized an assignment or otherwise cheated in their academic work or examination may expect an ‘F’ for the assignment in question or ‘F’ for the course.” All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct, which may impose additional sanctions.

Accessibility and accommodations: I am happy to make accommodations for differing abilities in the classroom. In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, Room 1074. The SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center. Accommodation letters may be delivered via email.

Email and Blackboard: This course will be delivered entirely via Blackboard, and you will be expected to check your WKU email regularly. Technological issues will not be an excuse for late or missing work. Before emailing me, I ask that you check the syllabus first for answers to questions regarding attendance, assignments, grades, etc. You can usually expect a response from me within 24-48 hours during the work week. Please use professional etiquette in your correspondence (salutation, signature, full sentences, etc.).

Late or missed work: Make-up assignments will only be accepted in cases of extreme circumstances (with appropriate documentation). It is your responsibility to keep up with the material in this online class. Please contact me if you need help catching up in the event of illness, etc. However, I ask that you consult the syllabus first.

Learn more about the [Folklore Minor](#) and [Master's Degree in Folk Studies](#).

[WKU Syllabus Information](#)

Weekly Schedule

Subject to change with notification.

Date	Lectures	Reading	Assignments
Week 1 8/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none">What is Folklore?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">American Folklore Society "What is Folklore?"The Library of Congress "What is Folklife?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Week 1 Check-In due via email by Friday, 8/30 (11:59pm)
Week 2 9/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Folklore and Folk Groups in the Digital Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Brunvand "Folklore in the News"Blank "Introduction: Pattern in the Virtual Folk Culture of Computer-Mediated Communication"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Quiz 1Discussion Post 1 <p><i>All quizzes and discussion posts are due by Friday (11:59pm) of the week in which they're assigned</i></p>
Week 3 9/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Legends and Ostension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Peck "Dark, Tall and Loathsome: the Emergence of a Legend Cycle in the Digital Era"Evans "The Ghosts in the Machine"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Quiz 2
Week 4 9/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">FoodwaysFolk Art and Motif	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bock "Ku Klux Kasserole and Strange Fruit Pies: A Shouting Match at the Border in Cyberspace"Foote "Userpicks: Cyber Folk Art in the Early 21st Century"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Quiz 3Discussion Post 2
Week 5 9/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Newslore and Refugee Lore	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Frank "Introduction: Tiny Revolutions"Baer, "'Give me...Your Huddled Masses': Anti-Vietnamese Refugee Lore and the 'Image of Limited Good'"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Quiz 4

Week 6 9/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fake News and Conspiracy Theories Vernacular Commemoration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frank, “<i>Caveat Lector: Fake News as Folklore</i>” Goldstein, “Never Remember: Fake News Turning Points and Vernacular Critiques of Bad Faith Communication” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiz 5 Discussion Post 3
Week 7 10/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No lectures: Midterm Exam and Fall Break this week 	Review your notes, lectures, and readings; contact me with questions!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midterm Exam: take online on Wednesday, 10/9
Week 8 10/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Folk Music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select a film from the “Music” category on Folkstreams.net, and watch it in order to complete Discussion Post 4: https://www.folkstreams.net/films.php?cat=8&sort=recent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Post 4
Week 9 10/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hip Hop and Murder Ballads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orejuela, Chapters 1-2 from <i>Rap and Hip Hop Culture</i> Thompson “Beatboxing, Mashups and Cyborg Identity: Folk Music for the Twenty-First Century” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiz 6
Week 10 10/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Folkloresque Occupational Folklore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster “Introduction: The Challenge of the Folkloresque” Gillis “An Unexpected Font of Folklore: Online Gaming as Occupational Lore” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiz 7 Discussion Post 5
Week 11 11/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fan Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horgan “Katrina Stories Get Graphic in <i>A.D.: New Orleans after the Deluge</i>” Jenkins “Star Trek Rerun, Reread, Rewritten: Fan Writing as Textual Poaching” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiz 8

Week 12 11/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cosplay and Bodylore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ellis “What Bronies See When They Brohoof: Queering Animation on the Dark and Evil Internet” • Hale “Cosplay: Intertextuality, Public Texts, and the Body Fantastic” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 9 • Discussion Post 6
Week 13 11/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Folklore and Film • Folktales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koven “Folklore and Film” • Preston “Disrupting the Boundaries of Genre and Gender: Postmodernism and the Fairy Tale” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz 10
Week 14 11/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No lectures: Film Review assignment and Thanksgiving Break this week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select and watch a folklore-related film in order to complete film review assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film Review due via email by Friday, 11/29 (11:59pm)
Week 15 12/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No lectures: Final Exam this week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review your notes, lectures, and readings; contact me with questions! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Exam: take online on Friday, 12/6