

Introduction to Folk Studies: FLK 276 - 003

Instructor: Taylor Dooley Burden (taylor.dooley645@topper.wku.edu)

Office hours: Tuesday 1:00-3:00 or by appointment

Course Description

This course will explore a range of traditional verbal art, custom, and material culture from a number of different regions and ethnic groups. At the same time, we will consider various interpretive, theoretical approaches to examples of folklore and folklife discussed. Recurring central issues will include the construction of personal and group identities, the nature of creativity and artistic expression, the dynamics of tradition, and the relationship between folklore and worldview. Students will learn to identify, collect, represent ethically, and offer sophisticated analyses of different forms of vernacular culture.

It is my hope that this course helps you **recognize** and **appreciate** the folklore present in your own culture and the cultures of those around you.

FLK 276 fulfills Colonnade Program requirements for Explorations, Arts & Humanities. It is also a required class for the Folklore minor.

FLK 276 Learning Outcomes

A student successfully completing FLK 276 will...

- be familiar with the general definitions, concepts, and history of the study of folklore as an academic discipline.
- have a basic understanding of the methods and practice of ethnographic research (i.e., fieldwork) in the discipline of folklore, and of ethical issues related to folklore research.
- be able to recognize the dynamic process by which folklore is created anew out of cultural context and how it expresses and embodies traditional aesthetics, beliefs, and values.
- recognize how various folklore forms serve to shape and influence society in ways that give rise to new forms of tradition and cultural expression.
- understand the ways in which traditional patterns of behavior and performance shape relationships with one another in community and society, both in the contemporary world and in the past.

Required Texts

Martha C. Sims and Martine Stephens. *Living Folklore: An Introduction to the Study of*

People and Their Traditions, 2nd edition. Logan: Utah State UP, 2011. (Available for purchase through the campus bookstore or other retailers).

Additional required readings are on Blackboard.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Discussion Boards	10 points each (11)	110
Essays	15 Points (4)	60
Quizzes	5 points each (6)	30
Midterm Exam		100
Fieldwork/Interview Activity		20
Final Exam		100
	Course Total Possible Points:	420

Discussion Boards:

Discussion Boards are 10 points each. Since this is an online class, this will act as your participating grade and serves as a great way to interact and engage with one another through content-related conversation!

Create a new thread in response to the discussion board topic for the week. Responses must be at least 250 words. Sources must be cited. Reply to two classmates on their respective threads.

Essays:

Essays are 15 points each. Essays should be double-spaced, *at* least 600 words, and submitted in Microsoft Word format. **If I cannot open it, I cannot grade it.**

Quizzes:

Quizzes are 5 points each. Questions can be multiple choice, matching, or open-ended. Sources must be cited if answering an open-ended question.

Exams:

There will be two formal exams at 100 points each. Both will be accessible on Blackboard.

Fieldwork/Interview Activity:

Students must interview an individual (parent, friend, family member, coworker, faith leader, etc.) to practice fieldwork skills learned in Week 7. Students must record these interviews (with a phone, computer, or other recording device) and interviews must be between 15 and 30 minutes. When students submit the activity, files must be either .mp3 or .mp4 and files must be accompanied by a two page essay discussing how the interview went, how students employed fieldwork skills learned in the lesson, and their general experience conducting fieldwork for possibly the first time!

Final Project:

For your final project, I want you to have *fun* (yes, fun!) and engage with the material you've learned throughout the semester.

You have two options. With both, you will identify one folk tradition in which you participate. Examples include: Musical traditions, foodways, occupational folklore, jokes, etc. Any genre discussed throughout the semester is fair game. You must identify your folk group in which this tradition takes places and apply your fieldwork and interview skills to ask someone(s) in your group where this tradition began, how it is passed down, why it is an important part of your culture, etc. Options:

1. Paper: Minimum 5 pages double Word document.
2. Podcast: Minimum 30 minutes interview style like a podcast episode (see Week 12). Files must .mp4 or .mp3.

A handout and video with more details will be provided in the coming weeks. *You must decide what option you are choosing (or a third option if you are creative) and submit your ideas to be on the Quiz for Week 7. All ideas must be preapproved.*

Final Grading Scale

90% – 100% = A

80% – 89% = B

70% – 79% = C

65% - 69% = D

Below 65% = F

SPECIAL NOTES

- Announced times, deadlines, etc are in **the Central Time Zone (CST)**
- All assignments, quizzes, essays, and the midterm exam are due on **Sunday night at 11:59 pm (CST)** The final exam will be due during finals week. Time and date will be provided ahead of time.

Policies & Resources

Class Policies

Communication Policy:

Communication in an online course can be infrequent and impersonal, but I want to create a culture of communication in our online space this semester. I am ***always*** happy to answer ***any*** questions you have about course content, assignments, and the Folk Studies program! Some of this material can feel new or overwhelming so I encourage you to send me an e-mail when questions or issues arise. I will respond to all e-mails within **24-48 hours**. I will do my best to respond as quickly as possible, but please respect the 24-48 hour window should I not respond right away.

When you send me an email, please put “FLK 276” in the subject line. I would hate to miss an e-mail or have it sent to spam so please include this as e-mail labeled in this manner will receive higher priority, especially on the weekends.

Reading and Participation:

My commitment to you is that I will not assign readings that are not discussed in class. In return, I ask that you read or watch all content provided for class as I have chosen my course materials intentionally and purposefully.

Late work:

All assignments must be submitted to Blackboard on or before their due date. Generally, I do not accept work after the due date. However, let me know immediately if you don't think you'll be able to submit an assignment by its due date. Unless you have an emergency, you will likely know ahead of time if you

will not be able to submit an assignment on time so please let me know in advance if something prevents you from submitting assignments in a timely manner. If I have not heard from you, I will not accept late work.

“Attendance Policy”:

According to the University Senate, “Registration in a course obligates the student to be regular and punctual in class attendance.” In an online course, we do not have regular class meetings, but you are expected to regularly log into the course site, get updates on what is happening in class, and stay on track with readings, listening to lectures, engaging in discussions, and in general fulfilling course requirements. Please know that blackboard keeps a record of your presence in (or absence from) the course site.

Email: You are expected to read and respond to your WKU email regularly. Before emailing me, I ask that you check the syllabus and other course documents first for answers to questions regarding policies, assignments, grades, etc. You can usually expect a response from me within 24-48 hours during the workweek. Please use professional etiquette in your correspondence (salutation, full sentences, signature).

Late or missed work: It is your responsibility to keep up with the material and assignments in this course, as outlined in the weekly schedule. Make-up discussion board posts, quizzes, or exams will be allowed in cases where you communicate with me about circumstances that prevent you from completing the work on time (such as illness).

Respect: 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 those positions 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.

University Policies and 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.

The Learning Center Peer Tutoring Services" The Learning Center (TLC) provides free tutoring services that empower students to achieve academic success. Trained peer tutors are available to review course content, answer questions, and demonstrate effective study strategies. TLC offers individual appointments and group sessions (PASS) for hundreds of undergraduate courses. For more information or to make an appointment, visit www.wku.edu/tlc.

Title IX: Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (#0.070) and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040). Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Deborah Wilkins, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.

Technological Support: Your success in this hybrid course depends on your ability to navigate Blackboard. Please inform me immediately if you have concerns about using this technology; technological issues will not be an excuse for late or missing work.

Make use of the resources available for tech support: browse the "Help" menu on your

Bb homepage or contact WKU's IT Helpdesk (270-745-7000 or <https://www.wku.edu/it/chat/>).

Weekly Readings and Assignments:

Week	Reading/Content	Assignments
Week 1: What is Folklore? January 18	Living Folklore (LF) Chapter One (10-21) Readings on BB Welcome/Intro Lecture	Discussion Board (DB) 1 5 Minute Essay
Week 2: Folk Group January 24	LF Chapter Two Readings on BB Lecture	DB 2 and Quiz 1
Week 3: Folk Narrative January 31	"Folk Narratives" Elliott Oring Readings on BB	DB 3 and Quiz 2
Week 4: Tradition February 7	LF Chapter Three Readings on BB	DB 4 and Quiz 3
Week 5: Ritual February 14	LF Chapter Four Readings on BB	DB 5 and Quiz 4
Week 6: Fieldwork and Ethnography February 21	LF Chapter Seven CityLore Interview Guide (BB)	Fieldwork/ Interview Activity
Week 7: Interpreting Folklore February 28	LF Chapter 6 (180-205) Readings on BB	DB 6 and Essay
Week 8: Midterm Exam March 7		Midterm Exam Due 3/13
Week 9: Spring Break March 14		
Week 10: Folk Art	Readings on BB	Essay

March 21		
Week 11: Folk Music March 28	"Ballads and Folksongs" Barre Toelken (BB) Video: "Etala: A Life in Klezmer" (BB)	DB 8 Extra Credit
Week 12: Foodways April 4	"Introudction" Lucy Long (BB) Readings on BB Video: "Drake's Barbecue" (BB)	DB 9 Extra Credit
Week 13: Folklore & Activism- Public Folklore April 11	Readings on BB Podcast: "FolkAid: Healing and Healers- Ep. 1 w/ Fatu Gayflor" (BB)	DB 10 and Essay
Week 14: Folklore and Education April 18	Readings on BB	DB 11 Quiz 5
Week 15: Folklore and the Media April 25	Readings on BB	DB 12 Quiz 6
Week 16: Final Exam May 2		Final Exam Due 5/4