

Introduction to Folklore Studies (SCAND 230/CLIT 230), Autumn Quarter 2021

Class meets Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:30 am to 12:20 pm, in Savery Hall 260

Instructors: Guntis Šmidchens, guntiss@uw.edu, Office hours MW 12:20... (outdoors, Quad) & appointment

Elizabeth Stang, estang@uw.edu Office hours TTh 11:00-12:00 (online, Zoom)

Course Description

Folklore Studies combines the methods and ideas of **Anthropology** and **Literature Studies**. A folklorist is interested in describing and understanding **living people** and their **traditions**. Every item of folklore (a story, song, custom, or material culture) exists in **variants**: Passing from person to person, from generation to generation, from place to place, folklore adapts to new contexts.

Folklore has existed since humans began talking many thousands of years ago... It is widespread, performed by millions of humans in all the world's cultures. But it is usually overlooked, trivialized, or marginalized in "serious" study of literature and culture. This course will add an **alternate perspective**: Because folklore is **common, widespread, and long lived**, it is THE KEY to understanding who human beings are! This class will focus on **traditional literature**:

Traditional Poetry. Proverbs are short traditional poems that encapsulate deep, powerful advice. Longer poems, **folksongs**, may be familiar as "Happy Birthday" or as foreign as the long mythological **epic** poem from Finland, Kalevala, which inspired Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings".

Legends are also both old and new. Stories about **ghosts** and the **supernatural** world; rumors about **witches** and demons among us (Slender Man!!); urban legends about **alligators in city sewers**... Legends are tightly bound to human **beliefs** and **worldviews**.

Folktales (sometimes called fairy tales) have existed for thousands of years. The Brothers Grimm started the academic study of tales in 1812. Since then, many of the world's leading thinkers have been attracted to tales. We will survey two hundred years of ideas about this, **the oldest and most widely shared literature** in the world. We'll encounter classic tales retold from Greek Antiquity to current American films.



The instructor's home department is **Scandinavian Studies**. Case studies discussed in the course are usually from that eight-country region of Northern Europe (**Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden**). You are encouraged to explore folklore from **any culture**, in any language, in independent assignments (50% of the grade!).

Course Objectives

- **Learn classic examples** of folklore: folktales such as "Cinderella" and "Dragonslayer" along with their variants; legends about witches, ghosts, and folk heroes; the Finnish epic "Kalevala" and Lithuanian "dainos" (songs), etc.
- **Learn classic interpretations and research methods** related to the above examples. How did Grimm, Aarne, Thompson, Hurston, Dorson, Dégh, Wiggins, McNeill and others analyze folklore?
- **DO folklore studies**: Collect traditional stories and an oral poem. Transcribe oral texts, and add the contextual information that will make them come alive for future readers of your essays.

Grades (details on pages 2-3)

- 25% Weekly online multiple choice/short answer quizzes (open book) and final exam (closed book).
- 10% Contributions to class discussions, one assigned post
- 15% Peer review/responses to classmates' written assignments:
- 50% Three written assignments, revised and submitted as a final portfolio
- **Self-grades matter, too**. How do you evaluate yourself in each area listed above? ([suggested UW guidelines](#))

Required Readings

- Lynne S. McNeill, **Folklore Rules: A Fun, Quick, and Useful Introduction to the Field of Academic Folklore Studies**. Utah State University Press, 2013 [[e-book in the UW Library](#)] (for access, first log in to Library website)
- Henry Glassie, **All Silver and No Brass** (1975). Various printed editions on sale at UW Bookstore and other booksellers.
- Henning Sehmsdorf & Reimund Kvideland, ed. and transl., **Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend** [[e-book at UW Library](#)]
- Selected chapters in Alan Dundes, ed., **International Folkloristics** [[e-book at the UW Library](#)],
- and other readings and films, as listed on the class website, including **Henry Glassie: Field Work** (2019, released 2021), \$4.95 online rental, <https://henryglassiefieldwork.com/>; and **Cinderella** (2021), online rental at [[Amazon Prime website](#)]

Access and Accommodations:

Your experience in this class is important. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please activate your accommodations via myDRS so we can discuss how they will be implemented in this course.

If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), contact DRS directly to set up an Access Plan. DRS facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations. Contact DRS at disability.uw.edu.

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](#). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form](#).

Assignments

Ten Quizzes and Exams (25%)

- Remember examples (story endings, key characters, etc.); folklorists and their ideas; and definitions of basic concepts.
 - How to study: (1) Before the lecture, read the assigned texts, taking notes to remember examples of folklore and comments about those examples; (2) during the lecture, reread your notes, scribbling in stuff you missed the first time; (3) after the lecture, review your notes and write down a sentence about the lecture's main takeaway; (4) then compare what you wrote to posts in the online discussion. If you see things that other students missed, add a short ("concise & precise") post to the discussion!

One contribution to Class Discussions – live and online post (10%)

- You are required to be a "point person" during and after one lecture (check list of names & lecture numbers):
 - During the live lecture, please sit in the front row. I *may* ask you to summarize or comment on the day's reading assignments, helping prompt class discussions.
 - After the lecture, on the same day, post a concise & precise "comment" (about 25 words) under that lecture in Canvas: note one takeaway, for example, and/or your response to the lecture, or to another post. Try not to repeat ideas already expressed by others. Follow up: keep your discussion going as needed.

Three Peer reviews (15%)

- Read the classmate's work as assigned in Canvas. In the comments section in the right margin, post a response to parts A and B as outlined below: In one sentence, summarize the folklore text they are analyzing (for example, "The essay presents a variant of Trick-or-treat tradition in Seattle during the 1970s, as remembered by Jane Doe"). Then respond to their work. Did they miss an important idea that was discussed in class? Do you see other interesting details in the text?
 - If your classmate missed something and didn't follow the directions, please let them know immediately (for example, in Assignment 1, maybe they forgot to include a "map"; in assignment 2, maybe they did not look up a specific Motif number, etc.). Your comments will help them improve the essay before they hand in the final portfolio in December.
 - If you posted your assignment after the deadline, you may miss the chance to do a peer review (zero points). It's not fair to review a classmate's assignment if you haven't done the assignment yourself.

Three Written Assignments plus portfolio (50%):

- Part A** presents a folklore text (length varies).
- Part B** analyzes that text, using ideas from lectures (125-250 words).
 - (continued on page 3)

Assignment 1 (begin Saturday, October 9; due at midnight, Saturday, Oct 23): Mumming traditions

- A. Ask another person if they have ever put on a mask and walked door to door, getting candy or other treats. Follow the ethnographic methods used by Henry Glassie in our textbook, to describe your conversation and the remembered tradition. Document things people said, did, and made or used, both during your interview and at the event they describe. Include a map of the place, and sketches of the mummers. Show your sketches to the person you interviewed, to check for accuracy.
- (Optional expansion for the *outstanding* grade: submit also an audio or video recording of your interview)
 - **Alternate Assignment 1, same methods:** Document a person's memories about a community singing occasion (a birthday celebration where people sang "Happy Birthday", a ball game & fans singing "Take me out to the ballgame," etc.)
- B. Compare this "informal traditional culture" to the Irish Christmas mummers described by Henry Glassie.
- Extensions are possible if you are writing about Halloween 2021. But you must hand in a draft outline on Oct 23.

Assignment 2 (due November 13): Comparative analysis of a legend.

- A. Document a **variant of a legend** we encountered in class (variants of other legends should first be discussed with the instructor). You can write the story down from memory, retell it yourself, or report a conversation with another person.
- (Optional expansion for the *outstanding* grade: record and transcribe an interview, word for word)
- B. **Annotate** this variant (125-250 words):
- **Context:** connect the text to its tradition (the storytelling that happened *before* your interview), its performer & performer's repertoire, and audience & their **beliefs**.
 - **Text:** Point out significant *motif* numbers from the *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*; note how the number is adapted to include people, places and things in the performer's context.
 - **Texture:** Note traditional patterns; comment on performance style.
 - You may include comparative notes, engaging examples from Module Three.

Assignment 3 (due on Saturday of Thanksgiving Weekend, Nov 27): Comparative analysis of a folktale.

- A. Create a **variant of a folktale type** that we encountered in class (stories from other sources should first be discussed with the instructor). You can record yourself or another person telling it, or you can write it, paint pictures, draw comics, create a video, sculpture, etc.).
- If you have pictures, scan them and paste them into your essay document.
 - If you use audio or video, upload it separately ("embedded" files don't work in Canvas). It's simplest to post it to a drive or platform like YouTube, and type a link in your essay.
 - If you are submitting media, don't forget to also tell your reader *in writing* what they can see and hear in your picture or recording. (Extra credit for transcribed oral stories).
- B. **Annotate** this new variant (125-250 words):
- **Text:** Summarize the *Type* description, and compare. Point out significant *motifs*.
 - **Texture:** Note traditional patterns (Olrik's "laws", Holbek's "structure"); comment on performance style (tales can be "performed" orally, visually, in writing, etc.).
 - **Context:** connect the text to its tradition, its performer and audience.
 - Add comparative notes and/or **interpretations** based on ideas or examples from Module Four.

Alternate assignment 3, group project: (Please discuss your plans with the instructor, at least a week before the due date). Together with classmates or friends, create a variant of the mummers play described by Glassie or Cashman. Post a shared video. Each participant submits an essay, including a link to the video, with a brief annotation (125-250 words):

- **Text:** Compare the performed text to texts assigned in class; **Texture:** Comment on how the text was performed; **Context:** connect the text to its tradition, its performers and audience; Add comparative notes / **interpretations** based on ideas or examples from the course.

Assignment 4 (due December 12): Summary and Portfolio

- A. Summarize takeaways from week 11 and the course as a whole: What is folklore, who are the folk, why study them?
- B. **Introduce** three folklore texts you've analyzed: a folktale, a legend, and an oral poem; **connect** these texts to what you wrote in part (A), and add your revised, final versions of Assignments 1-3. Please resubmit audio & video recordings.

Lecture and meeting schedule

The class will meet for twenty one 2-hour lectures (numbered below). There are usually two topics per meeting, each connected to about one hour of lecture/discussion. Read the assignments listed under a lecture before watching the lecture. Write “concise and precise” notes, to remember what you’ve read.

- Changes to this schedule are possible: Follow the “Modules” section in Canvas for updates.

Module One (Sept 29-Oct 1): Introduction

Week 1, September 29-October 2: What is folklore studies?

(#1) Wednesday, Sept 29: Diving right into folklore studies

What is folklore? What is folklore studies?

→ Optional background reading:

- McNeill, Chapter 1 in *Folklore Rules* [[e-book in the UW Library](#)] (for access, first log in to Library website)
- Chapters by Jacob Grimm and William Thoms in *International Folkloristics*, pages 1-14; and Issue #1 of *Journal of American Folklore* (1888). [[Link to e-journal](#)]
- Anette Toro et al, Pivoting, Adapting, Improvising, and Reinventing: Experiencing Cultural Practices in the Time of COVID-19. *Smithsonian Center for Folklife & Cultural Heritage Magazine*, August 30, 2021. [[Link to article online](#)]

After class: Online quiz, max 30 min; multiple choice / short answer. Take it any time before midnight Friday. This first quiz is very low-stakes. Its purpose is for you to try out the technical side of taking a quiz online.

Weekend Film, Henry Glassie: Fieldwork <https://henryglassiefieldwork.com/> (\$4.95 rental on [itunes](#) or [projectr](#))

Module Two (Oct 4-24), Lectures #2-#7: Folk Poetry in Context

Week 2 (October 4-8): Mapping Folk Poetry

(#2) Monday: Collecting folklore (fieldwork): Teachers and students

Where’s the folklore? How do I identify it and document it?

→ (read **before** class):

- McNeill, Chapter 2, “What do folklorists do,” pages 20-36 in *Folklore Rules* [[e-book in the UW Library](#)] (for access, first log in to Library website)
- Weekend Film (1 hr 45 min), **Henry Glassie: Fieldwork** <https://henryglassiefieldwork.com/> (\$4.95 rental on [itunes](#) or [projectr](#))
- Henry Glassie, *All Silver and No Brass* (Ellen Cutler interviews), pages 3-10
- Wiggins, W. H. (1974). “[Lift Every Voice](#)”: A Study of Afro-American Emancipation Celebrations. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 9(3-4), 180-191.

- What he knew, and how he knew it: [William Wiggins 1974 dissertation](#), interviews, Volume 2. See, for example, Field Texts: #40 (Volume 2, page 38), #53, #56, #95, #104, #151; notice poetry and songs, especially “Lift Every Voice,” Volume 2, page 270. Also look at maps, Volume 1, pages 18-22, 37, 59, 81, 104, 126, 143.
 - Find and listen to online variants of “Lift Every Voice.” How do people adapt/change the tradition?

→ How do Glassie and his student Wiggins describe people and their “informal traditional culture”? Can you do this, too?

(#3) Wednesday: Mapping oral poetry, a “voice of humankind”

- Šmidchens, Five Latvian Proverbs, Global and Personal,” Lituanus (2019): 16-31.
 - Reference Tool, [Matti Kuusi Index of Types of International Proverbs](#) (click on “Proverb Types” to search for a specific proverb, or “Typology” to see a summary outline).
- Glassie, All Silver & No Brass (Nolan interviews & analysis), pages 11-19 and 68-75.
 - Film (33 minutes): Karsten Bergenhoj, *Masks and Mummies of the North* (1984)
- John Miles Foley, “Four Scenarios” pages 1-10 in *How to Read an Oral Poem* (2002)
 - Resource: [Global Jukebox](#) (Alan Lomax Archive) (see also [Demonstration Video](#))
 - Resource: UNESCO, [What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?](#) and [Dive in!](#)

→ In-class: Discuss oral poetry you have encountered in the Global Jukebox. How do we describe the texts we hear?

After class: Online quiz, max 30 min; multiple choice / short answer. Take it any time before midnight Friday.

- **This weekend, begin** Assignment 1 (due Sunday, October 31), Mumming traditions today (see page 3). You may be called on (unexpectedly!) in class, to talk about your work on this assignment.

Week 3 (October 11-15) Forms of oral poetry, old and new

(#4) Monday: Reading, comparing & describing old and new texts of ballads & epics

Ballads, epics and history

- Selected English, American and Danish ballads:
 - Bishop Thomas Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1775) [[e-book at UW Libraries](#)]; read the "Dedication" (v-x), Preface (xi-xiii) and "Edward" (59-61);
 - Edward (variant), sung by May Kennedy McCord (1958), in [The Online Max Hunter Collection](#)
 - Danish Ballad, "Svend in the Rose Garden" [text on class website] and [2010 recording by GNY on YouTube](#).
- Chapter by the Finnish folklorist Kaarle Krohn, in [International Folkloristics](#), pages 37-46.
 - "Sampo" sung by Iivana Iivanainen, 1877
 - "Kantele" sung by Anni Kiriloff in 1922 [text and audio recording]
 - Listen to "Steady old Vainamoinen", Finnish song #15 in [California Gold online archive](#), [and read the text]
 - Background: Elias Lönnrot, [Kalevala](#), Rune XL, lines 221-264 in Epub, scroll to 81%;

How to Write Oral Poetry: Ethnopoetics, two case studies

- John Miles Foley, Ethnopoetics, pages 95-103 in *How to Read an Oral Poem*
 - Listen while you read Foley's transcript, [Lynn Procope, "Elemental Woman"](#)
 - Adam Bradley, "Rap Poetry 101," pages xi-xxiv in [Book of Rhymes: The Poetics of Hip Hop](#) (2009).
 - Listen & read "transcript": Marc Bamuthi Joseph, ["You have the rite" \[TED 2019\]](#); where's the poetry?

→ In-class: Giving voice to old texts

(#5) Wednesday: Oral poetry, old and new

Informal Traditional Culture, what do we study? Origin or performance?

- McNeill, Chapter 1 in *Folklore Rules* [[e-book in the UW Library](#)]
- Glassie, All Silver & No Brass (Flanagan interviews & analysis), pages 20-37 and 76-95.
 - Compare Glassie's description to excerpts from James Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (1935)
 - Optional expansion: Glassie, "Survival," pages 53-67.

Compare two views of Children's rhymes, old and new

- H. Carrington Bolton. [The Counting-out Rhymes of Children. A Study in Folk-Lore](#). *JAF*, 1,1 (1888), 31-37.
- Kenneth Goldstein, "Strategy in Counting Out", in [International Folkloristics](#), pages 231-244.

→ In-class: Remembering the rhymes

After class: Online quiz, max 30 min; multiple choice / short answer. Take it any time before midnight Friday.

Week 4 (October 18-22) Meanings and Functions of folksongs and singing

(#6) Monday: What does singing do? Functions and meanings of songs

- Glassie, All Silver & No Brass (Boyle interviews & analysis), pages 38-49 and 122-142.
- Richard Burns, "Where is Jody Now," pages 79-98 in [Warrior Ways](#) (2012)
 - Background: find recorded cadences online, for example, a [1945 recording of the "Duckworth Cadence"](#) and the [videoclip from Battleground \(1949\)](#), mentioned by Burns on pages 91-92
 - Optional updates to this chapter, books on soldier's songs: Pieslak, J. (2009). [Sound targets: American soldiers and music in the Iraq war](#); Daughtry, J. (2015). [Listening to war: Sound, music, trauma and survival in wartime Iraq](#). Soldiers songs, [Live from Iraq](#) (2005).
- Listen to Alan Lomax field recording of [Ed Lewis and unidentified men](#), and [Alan Lomax's conversation with Ed Lewis](#). Read Claire Anderson's, ["All in a Day's Work: Rhythm and Work"](#) published by Association for Cultural Equity.

→ In-class: Voicing songs and worldviews

(#7) Wednesday: Songs and Politics: Why do we do folklore studies...

- Henry Glassie, *All Silver and No Brass*, Introduction and "Envoi", pages xi-xx & 145-151.
- John and Alan Lomax, et al. (1947). *Folk song: U.S.A.: The 111 best American ballads*. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce. (excerpts from Introduction and the last song, number 111, "Keep your hand on that plow")
 - Case Study of another American folksong, maybe?: Amy Whorf McGuighan, "Take me out to the ballgame" Listen/watch variants: <https://youtu.be/HnHV5FaqvEs>; and <https://youtu.be/8mOKIBG-zIE>

Three songs of American Civil Rights movements, 1947-2018:

- [Tracing the Journey of We Shall Overcome](#) (watch interviews with Pete Seger and Jamila Jones)
 - Aretha Franklin, "[Respect](#)"
 - Background: Joe Street, "Introduction," [The Culture War in the Civil Rights Movement](#). U Press of Florida, 2017. (see especially p. 11).
- Stephanie Shonekan, "Black Mizzou: Music & stories one year later, pages 14-33, in Portia K. Maultsby, ed., [Black Lives Matter and Music](#). Indiana University Press, 2018.
 - Listen to songs mentioned: [Kendrick Lamar's "Alright"](#). and the [Mizzou Legion of Black Collegians video](#)
 - Optional expansion: read Maultsby's "Foreword" and Orejuela's "Introduction" to this book; and for an update to Alison Martin's chapter, "Black Music Matters" (pages 70-85), see Marisa Lang, "[Go-go is signed into law as the official music of D.C.](#)" *Washington Post*, 19 February 2020.

→ In-class: What does singing do? Were/are songs necessary in the American Civil Rights Movement? Which ones?

After class: Online quiz, max 30 min; multiple choice / short answer. Take it any time before midnight Friday.

Due at midnight on Saturday, October 23: Assignment #1 (see above).

Module Three (Oct 25-Nov 25), Lecture #8-13: Reality Stories (Legends) and beliefs

Week 5 (October 25-29). Introducing legend and belief

(#8) Monday: Discovering international legends. Truth-seekers vs. Folklorists

- McNeil, Chapter 3, Types of Folklore Things We Say," in *Folklore Rules* [[e-book in the UW Library](#)], pages 37-44.
 - Sharon Sherman, [Tales of the supernatural](#) (1970, 26 min), and 8 minute excerpt from Candyman (1992)
 - "Urban Folklore" [remember "today" here = 1970's!], in [Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend](#), 375-394.
 - "The Black Death," in [Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend](#), pages 344-352
 - Tools for Comparative Research (click on links, then log in on the UW Libraries website for access):
 - [Motif-Index of Folk Literature](#)
 - Jan Brunvand, [Encyclopedia of Urban Legends](#); (skim this book! see his definitions of legend, pages 173-177)
- In-class: Share legends you have heard...

(#9) Wednesday: How believable are legends? Memorates, ostensive legends, and belief

Fabulates, Memorates, and Ostensive Legends

- Scandinavian ghost legends, chapters 17-20 (pages 93-109), in [Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend](#)
- Linda Dégh, Legend and Belief, excerpts, pages 150-153 and 276-290.
- E. Bird, Playing with Fear: Interpreting the Adolescent Legend Trip [[Link](#)]

Some functions of legends (Believable? Not believable? – does the question make sense?):

- Justin Oswald, "Camel Spider Stories," pages 38-57 in [Warrior Ways](#) (2012)

→ In-class: Share legends you have heard... Experiment, transform a fabulate into a memorate.

After class: Online quiz, max 30 min; multiple choice / short answer. Take it any time before midnight Friday.

Weekend: Saturday-Sunday, October 30-31: Be a participant observer of Halloween folk traditions in Seattle!

Week 6 (Nov 1-5): Believable... to whom, and how believable?

(#10) Monday: Studying "Believable" Legends

Who are the legend tellers, where & how? Functions of Legends. Guest lecture, Henning Sehmsdorf

- Linda Dégh, [UFOs and how folklorists should look at them](#). *Fabula* 18,1 (1977), pages 242-248.
 - Optional expansion: Thomas Bullard, [UFO Abduction Reports](#). *Journal of American Folklore* (1989)
 - Two Irish fairy legends collected by Henry Glassie [texts and recordings]
 - Scandinavian fairy legends, Chapters 47 & 53 (pages 222-237, 272-274) in [Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend](#)
 - Norwegian-American stories recorded in Washington State by Henning Sehmsdorf, pages 11-28, in [Continuity of Norwegian Tradition in the Pacific Northwest](#) (2020).
 - Read: Andrew Peck, ["Tall, Dark and Loathsome"](#) (2015)
 - Watch (11 min): Lynn McNeill, ["Folklore doesn't meme what you think it memes"](#) (18 Dec 2015)
- In-class: What texts, textures and contexts add believability to a legend?

(#11) Wednesday: The Legend Debate

The Legend Debate. Who are legend tellers? **How** do they believe these stories?

- Linda Dégh, Legend and Belief (excerpt from Legend & Belief, pages 108-115)
- Linda Dégh (1976). "Legend and Belief" pages 93-123 in [Folklore Genres](#). (focus on transcribed conversation, pages 104-107; and "multiconduit" diagram, page 118)
 - Scandinavian witches (numbers 34.3, 36.1, 38.1, 38.6, 39.3, 43.1) in [Scand. Folk Belief and Legend](#), 157-200

Fear of werewolves, real or not?

- Read McNeill's chapter "Things we believe" in [Folklore Rules](#) [e-book in the UW Library], pages 56-61.
 - Scandinavian werewolf legends in [Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend](#), p. 74-80
 - Legends in literature & film: Excerpt from Meyer, *New Moon* (chapter 12), and excerpt from Rowling, *Harry Potter, The Prisoner of Azkaban* + videoclips from the movie.
 - Optional expansion: Brent Stypczynski. (2010). [Wolf in professor's clothing: J. K. Rowling's werewolf as educator](#). *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, 21(1), 57.

→ In-class: Who are the people who tell legends? Who are the people in legends?

After class: Online quiz, 30 min; multiple choice / short answer. Take it any time before midnight Friday.

Week 7 (Nov 8-12): Legends, past and present

(#12) Monday: Historical Legends; Hunting for history, heroes and worldviews

- Classic European "Historical legends," Part IX in [Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend](#);
 - Particular attention to "Holger the Dane" (number 57.1; see also the [Danish sculpture](#) by Hans Peder Pedersen-Dan), and legends about "The Black Death," pages 344-351.
 - More classic legends/oral history: Memories of serfdom in the Baltic; and slavery in the USA: [Billie McCrea memories of Emancipation](#), recorded in 1940 by John Lomax (audio 8 min & transcript in pdf)
 - Richard Dorson, excerpts from *Land of the Millrats* (1981): Introduction, pages 1-4; and "Juan Gomes, Mexican Urban Man" 147-158; and "Black Outlooks" 165-174.
 - William Wiggins, "Joe Louis, American Folk Hero." Pages 148-171, in [Sport and the Color Line: Black Athletes and Race Relations in Twentieth Century America](#). Edited by Patrick B. Miller and David K. Wiggins. Taylor & Francis Group, 2003.
- In-class: In-class: The power (and importance of stories); Add real-world details to convert a folktale into a myth!

(#13) Wednesday, Nov 10: Legend : Folktale :: Reality : Fantasy

Close reading, classic folktales vs. legends. What are trolls? What are stories about trolls?

- Classic American folk history, folklore & "fakelore" Lee Smits columns in [Seattle Star page 1, Nov 17](#)-Nov 29, 1920; Background: Dorson, "Lumberjacks" in *Bloodstoppers & Bearwalkers* 186-210; and Esther Shephard, *Paul Bunyan*.
- Olav Eivindsson Austad, "Ashfart and the Troll" pages 81-83 in [All the World's Reward: Folktales told by Five Scandinavian Storytellers](#). Seattle: UW Press, 1999.
 - Reference: ATU 1052, ATU 1137
- Scandinavian legends about trolls, pages 301-313, in [Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend](#)
 - John Lindow (2014). "Epilogue," pages 138-143 in *Trolls: An unnatural history*. London: Reaktion Books.

After class, midterm exam: due Friday, November 12.

(Thursday, Nov 11: Veterans Day Holiday)

Due Nov 13: Assignment #2, Legend (see page 3)

Weekend Film: Watch the new 2021 film (2 hours), *Cinderella* [[Link to Amazon Prime website](#)]

Module Four (Nov 15-Dec 4): Fantasy Stories (Folktales): Texts, textures, contexts

Week 8 (Nov 15-20): Folktale-telling, storytellers and storytelling communities

(#14) Monday: Origin and Diffusion of Folktale Texts

Tools for International Comparative Study of Folktales. To understand how folktales work, you must read many folktales!

- Cinderella, a Case Study: How are variants similar and different?
 - Watch the new film, *Cinderella* [[Link to Amazon Prime website](#)]
 - Read four variants by [Perrault](#), [Grimm 1812](#), [Grimm 1857](#), and [Asbjørnsen & Moe 1843](#).
 - And one more Finnish variant told by Aato Kempainen in 1882.
 - Then, read Cinderella poems: “Cinderella, me? No!” by Norwegian poet Margaret Sjelbred, and other authors.
- Resource: Stith Thompson’s and Uther’s descriptions of Type 510.
 - More Resources: Uther’s introduction to the 2004 edition of the Type Index; examples of ATU Types (various numbers); compare alternate Type descriptions by Thompson
- Background (optional expansion): Chapter by Sydow in [International Folkloristics](#), pages 137-52.
→ In-class exercise: remembering tales. Try to remember/summarize the folktales we’ve read.

(#15) Wednesday: Storytellers in Context

Discovery of storytellers, storytelling traditions and storytelling communities. Read lots of stories before class:

- Boris & Yuri Sokolov, in [International Folkloristics](#), pages 73-82.
 - Optional: Folktales told by Medvedev (recorded by Sokolovs) and Vinokurova (recorded by Azadovskii)
- Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (1935) 3-6 & 42-63. **Compare** two variants of Type 1525:
 - (1) as told above by Julius Henry (in [Eatonville FL](#)), p. 45-50, and
 - (2) “The Fortune Teller,” as told in 1911 by a Norwegian, Olav Austad, in [All the World’s Reward](#), pages 91-96.

Who are the storytellers? Who are the folklorists? (ATU 327, children and ogre)

- Jane Muncy in [Hyden KY](#), “Merrywise,” [audio recording](#) (5½ min); rough transcript, and published text
 - [Essay by Carl Lindahl about Muncy, Merrywise, and the folklorist Leonard Roberts](#)
 - Winther, Pancake House (1823).
 - Grimm, Hansel and Gretel
 - (Compare Grimm story to Judie Eddington’s video recitation, 19 min)

→ In-class: telling tales to understand storytellers. Try to retell folktales we’ve read

After class: Online quiz, 30 min; multiple choice / short answer. Take it any time before midnight Friday.

Week 9 (Nov 22-24): Analyzing folktale texts, interpreting meanings

(#16) Monday: Storytelling Texture

Case study, “Dragonslayer”

- Three Variants of ATU 300/ATU 303: (1) [Grimm, “2 brothers”](#); (2) Swedish “3 swords”; (3) Danish/Ane Margrete Hansen, “Two Hunters” in [All the World’s Reward](#), pages 131-141.
 - Resources: Stith Thompson’s overview of Type 300; and ATU Type 300

Style and structure of oral narratives, especially magic tales

- Axel Olrik and Vladimir Propp in [International Folkloristics](#), pages 83-98; and 119-130. **Focus on Propp’s 31 actions, pages 122-123.** (Re-read folktales from earlier assignments: how do they mesh with Olrik & Propp’s ideas?)
→ In-class: Remembering tale structures: Can you retell compressed or expanded variants of the tales we’ve read?

(#17) Wednesday: Interpreting Folktales. One story, five meanings?

Interpreting Folktales. What do they “mean” (for their tellers)? (case study: Monster husbands)

- Case Study, Danish folktale [King Lindorm](#)
 - Three more variants of Snake Husband: (1) Panchatantra, [Enchanted Brahman's Son](#), (2) Zsuzsanna Palko, “Snake Prince”, and (3) Lithuanian folktale “Eglė, Queen of Snakes” (+film, 7 min)
- Bengt Holbek “Quest for Meaning” [\[Link\]](#)
 - Three interpretations: (1) Clarissa Pinkola Estes, “Bluebeard” (and audio recording), in *Women Who Run with the Wolves*; (2) Bruno Bettelheim, *Uses of Enchantment* (excerpts); (3) Henry Glassie, “Meaning,” in *All Silver & No Brass*, pages 94-121.

→ In-Class, Retelling folktales: What do YOU think about when you tell a folktale?

After class: Online quiz, max 30 min; multiple choice / short answer. Take it any time before midnight Friday.

Weekend (Nov 25-28): Thanksgiving Holiday

Due Nov 27: Assignment #3, Folktale (see page 3)

Weekend movies: Two American myth-tellers: Joseph Campbell (60 min) and Marija Gimbutas (60 min)

Week 10 (Nov 29-Dec 3) Powerful Stories

(#18) Monday: Folktales and Myths, ancient and modern. Contrasting stories about stories.

- Barre Toelken, “Beauty behind me, beauty before” *Journal of American Folklore* 117 (2004): 441-445 [\[Link\]](#)
 - Jacob Grimm (1835), on relation between folktales, legends, and Viking mythology
 - Loki and the Master Builder
 - King Olaf and the Giant
 - Background (optional): [Grimm, Rumpelstiltskin](#).
 - Last weekend’s movies about two famous American myth-tellers: Joseph Campbell and Marija Gimbutas
- Why study ancient mythology? Why retell ancient myths?

(#19) Wednesday: Searching for happiness in folktales, and in folklore...

- Watch: Film, [Soldier Jack](#) (39 minutes)
- Read: Soldier Jack, told by Gaines Kilgore in [Pound, KY](#), and recorded by Richard Chase in 1938.
 - Background: Grimm 44 ([Godfather Death](#)), Grimm 82 ([Gambling Hansel](#)), Afanasyev ([The Soldier & Death](#))
- Read two folktales told by Kristaps Kārklīņš to Ludis Šmidchens in 1930 (Incredible Godfather, Princess & 3 Brothers).
 - Background: Sigurd Saga, pages 61-68 in Byock, Jesse L. [Saga of the Volsungs The Norse Epic of Sigurd the Dragon Slayer](#). Univ. of California Press, 2012.
 - Background, The [boy on the glass mountain](#), a national hero of Latvia, and videoclip from *Golden Horse*.
- Roger Welsch, “Confessions of a Wannabe,” *Journal of American Folklore*, 124 (2011), 19-30. [\[link to article\]](#)

After class: Online quiz, 30 min; multiple choice / short answer. Take it any time before midnight Friday.

Weekend film (60 minutes): [Presenting Baltic folklore at the Smithsonian festival 1998](#) (watch the video on this page)

Module Five (Dec 6-10): Presenting Folk and Folklore. Why?

Week 11 (Dec 6-10) Observing, collecting, celebrating folklore

(#20) Monday: Back to the Field and Fieldwork... What folks am I, who and what am I studying? How?

- Ray Cashman, "Christmas Mumming Today in Northern Ireland," *Midwestern Folklore* 26,1 (2000): 27-47.
 - Glassie/Shukla discussion after the film's premiere at TIFF, 2019. [[Link to YouTube](#)]
 - McNeill, Chapter 4, "Types of Folk Groups" in *Folklore Rules* [[e-book at UW Library](#)], 65-88.
Review also Chapters 1 and 2, which we read at the beginning of the quarter.
 - A missing chapter? Šmidchens, "Immigrant & Ethnic folklore"
 - Sehmsdorf, pages 96-101 in [Continuity of Norwegian Tradition in the Pacific Northwest](#) (2020).
 - Another omission? Amy Kotkin & Stephen Zeitlin, "In the Family Tradition," in *Handbook of American Folklore* (1982).
 - Kathrine Morgan, "[Caddy Buffers](#)" 1976 Smithsonian Festival Program, pages 26-27.
- In-class: How many "folks" are you, and the people you study? How do we study other people?

(#21) Wednesday: Celebrating worldviews

Why study folklore?

- McNeill, "Conclusion," in *Folklore Rules*, [[e-book at UW Library](#)], 89-90
- Henry Glassie". (2014). War, Peace, and the Folklorist's Mission. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 127(503), 72-81.
[[Link to article](#)]
 - [Henry Glassie and Pravina Shukla at the 2019 documentary film premiere](#), Toronto International Film Festival
- [Baltic folklore at the Smithsonian festival 1998](#) (watch the 60 min video on this page)
 - Remembering the Event, 2013.
 - Šmidchens, "A Chain of Friendship" [[2020 essay about Baltic nonviolent traditions](#)]

Folklorists as culture brokers

- Richard Kurin, "Why we do the festival" (1998)
- Richard Kurin, Cultural Diplomacy. Talk Story Fall 2007, Number 32. https://folklife-media.si.edu/docs/folklife/education_exhibits/pdf/TS_Fall07.pdf
 - Watch "Smithsonian Festival Introduction" (12 min) video on [their information page](#);
 - ...and more background, from our backyard here in Seattle: Northwest Folklife [[video](#)] and [[website](#)]

→ Smithsonian Festival – does it do what it hopes to do? How?

→ After class: Online quiz, max 30 min; multiple choice / short answer. Take it any time before midnight Friday.

Due Saturday, December 11: Assignment #4: Summary and Portfolio (see page 3)

Final Exam Monday, Dec 13, 8:30-10:30 am: Why study folklore, and How?

Overview of meetings, readings (due before the meeting), quizzes and written assignments:

	Textbook/analysis	Texts/case studies	Quizzes (due Fri) & Assignments (Sat)
Module One: Introduction			
1	(FR 1; IF 1-Grimm & 2-Thoms)	Pandemic traditions	Practice quiz #1
Module Two: Oral Poetry			
2	FR 2; ASNB 3-10; Henry Glassie film	Wiggins, Juneteenth ethnography	
3	Šmidchens; ASNB 11-19 & 68-75	Online archives (resources)- songs & proverbs	Quiz begin Asgt 1
4	IF 6 Krohn; Foley.	Int'l Ballad; Finnish Kalevala epic; Black oral poetry	
5	FR 1; ASNB 20-37 & 76-95; IF 20	Frazer & Bolton analyses, mumming & counting out	Quiz
6	ASNB 20-37 & 76-95; Burns	Soldiers' cadences and work songs	
7	ASNB intro & 145-151; Lomax	American folksongs, Civil Rights Movement songs	Midterm test; Assignment 1 due
Module Three: Legends			
8	FR 3; Motif-Index	"urban" legends; SBFL plague legends	
9	Dégh; Bird; Oswald	SBFL ghost legends, camel spider stories	Quiz
10	Dégh; Peck	SBFL fairies; other fairies & spirits; UFOs	
11	Dégh; FR 3	SBFL witches & werewolves, legends in film	Quiz
12	Dorson; Wiggins	SBFL historical legends, American folk legends	
13	Dorson; Lindow	SBFL trolls and lumberjacks, legends vs tales	Midterm test Assignment 2 due
Module Four: Folktales			
14	IF 16-Sydow; ATU Index	Cinderella variants (film , written, and oral)	
15	IF 10-Sokolovs; Hurston; Lindahl	Storytellers: Vinokurova, Henry, Muncy & others	Quiz
16	IF 11-Olrik & 14-Propp	Dragonslayer variants	
17	Holbek; ASNB 94-121	Snake Husband variants; Freudian & Jungian analysis	Quiz
18	Toelken, Grimm	Myth; (films) -Campbell & Gimbutas	
19	Welsch	(film & oral tales) Godfather Death; Glass mountain	Quiz; Assignment 3 due
Module Five: Presenting Folk & Folklore			
20	FR 4; Glassie	Folk groups; immigrant folklore & family folklore	
21	Kurin; Glassie	Smithsonian Folklife Festival (film); culture brokers	Short Quiz Final Portfolio Due
Final Exam December 13, 8:30-10:30 am			

FR = Folklore Rules, by Lynn McNeill

ASNB = All Silver & No Brass, by Henry Glassie

IF = International Folkloristics, edited by Alan Dundes

SBFL = Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend, edited by Henning Sehmsdorf and Reimund Kvideland

See other readings in the detailed lecture schedule, or in Canvas