

WEBSTER UNIVERSITY

COURSE SYLLABUS

COMM 5110.01
COURSE NUMBER AND SECTION

Marlene Birkman
INSTRUCTOR

American Folklore
COURSE TITLE

TERM: F I YEAR: 2003

F II

SP I

SP II

SU XX

50
SITE

1. **Course Description: (Student focus, rationale, scope, prerequisites)**

American folklore, its characteristics and motifs, is examined and experienced. Students will study the folk sayings, stories, superstitions, cures, customs, gestures, games, songs, and art present in their lives and in the lives of elementary and secondary students. Films, speakers, videos, slides, and activities will survey and call up the lore.

2. **Learning Outcomes: (Goals, objectives, course outcomes, etc.)**

Students will increase their knowledge and understanding of the nature and characteristics of American folklore as they categorize and record entries in their family notebooks, participate in and categorize a folk adventure, study a particular form of lore to document and present at a folk festival.

Students will compare and contrast American folklore of the past with that of the present.

Students will recognize American folklore in action and themselves as part of the action.

Students will increase their knowledge of recent books, films, and other American folklore resources.

3. **Schedule of required readings, class preparations and assignments, lectures, discussions, student presentations, and exams:**

WEEK 1: Introduction of Folk
What is oral tradition?
What is folklore, fakelore, folklore? Resources: Classifying-Oral, Customary, Material

COMM 5110.01 - Marlene Birkman

- WEEK 2:** Sharing of Family Object.
Proverbs I was raised on: Bring five in writing.
Riddles: Bring one in writing.
Games: Type one and be prepared to teach and play it.
Bring three folklore books.
Brunvand 1-7, 18
MISSOURI: PORTRAIT OF THE
PEOPLE, PIZZA, PIZZA, DADIO
- WEEK 3:** Superstitions
Bring five and fetish.
Bring cure in writing.
Adventures, Outside Reading I, Brunvand 14
- WEEK 4:** Myths, Legends, and Tales
Brunvand, 8,9,10
Adventures
ARROW TO THE SUN, BEARSKIN,
HOW THE KIWI LOST HIS WINGS
- WEEK 5:** Folk Music, Dance, Drama, and Gestures
Brunvand 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, Outside Reading II
Adventures, Bring spoons. Cora Lippi: Music and Dance Maker
WATER FROM ANOTHER TIME
- WEEK 6:** Folk Crafts, Art, and Architecture
Brunvand 19, 20, 21
Bring three examples, Outside Reading III(Book)
Course Notebook Due
ART IS, HANDS OF MARIA
AUNT ARIE
- WEEK 7:** Customs, Festivals, Costumes, and Food
Brunvand 15, 22, 23: Family Notebooks Due
Family food and recipe exchange
GARLIC IS AS GOOD AS TEN
MOTHERS
- WEEK 8:** FOLK FESTIVAL
Pound Party

COMM 5110.01 - Marlene Birkman

"As literalness pervades our lives, more and more the world becomes non-expressive....Life becomes prosaic, losing its vividness and its dramatic quality. It is no longer intrinsically interesting. We do not linger over signposts but hurry on to places they designate."

--Harry Browdy--

EXPECTATIONS:

1. Each student will keep a folklore notebook of findings. Relationships to text readings, class discussions, course, and classroom applications should be noted. (Refer to Brunvand chapters for appropriate notebook divisions.)
2. Each student will keep a family notebook with Brunvand divisions.
3. Each student will isolate a folktale/folklore interest to examine extensively. The range of possibilities for this interest is enormous. Ideas might be uncovered by consulting other folk, the bibliography, a folklore dictionary, The Journal of American Folklore, etc. The outcome of this exploration will be a nine minute presentation at the folkfest.

Each pursuit will include the following:

1. A folklore classification - oral, customary, material lore.
 2. The reading of at least three additional sources; one should be book length.
 3. A connection to some aspect of the course.
 4. A bibliography of consulted sources and handout/s for the class.
4. Each student will identify and experience a folklife adventure and imaginatively render it to the class (5 minutes) Appropriate documentation and classification is expected.
 5. Each student will submit outside readings according to distributed format.
 6. Each student will attend all classes, interact with the folk, and submit all work on specific due dates, according to guidelines.

The following expectations will count toward the credit or grade:

Course Notebook
Family Notebook
Folk festival presentation
Readings for presentation
Folk life adventure and participation
Quizzes

In order to receive credit, student must submit work on due dates according to described guidelines. All work must be satisfactorily completed.

COMM 5110.01 - Marlene Birkman

If you have any questions, please call me at 968-7094. I hope that each of you will stop in my office to visit at least once during the semester.

Marlene Ann Birkman

4. **RESOURCES:**

Text Used: Brunvand, Jan Harold, 1998. The Study of American Folklore: An Introduction. 4th edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Handouts, Speakers, Folks in Class

Supplemental Readings: (List and indicate how these are to be used.)

Visual Aids: Films, filmstrips, slides, realia

5. **EVALUATION:**

- a) Term Paper
- b) Examinations
- c) Class participation X
- d) Class presentation X Folklife Adventure, Folk Festival
- e) Other Family Notebooks, Outside Reading Response Papers, Quizzes

6. **SUPPLEMENTS:** (Study Guide, Sample Tests, Project Outlines may be attached.) Please list.

7. **3 HOUR COURSES:** Students taking an 8 week course for 3 credit hours will complete the following additional assignments and/or attend the following additional class meetings;

- a) Lab
- b) Curriculum Project
- c) Paper(s)
- d) AV Project
- e) Other Additional reading and extended poetry collection.

COMM 5110.01 - Birkman

8. FINAL PROJECTS:

Final projects/papers will be returned to students in the following manner:

Projects/papers will be returned during the last meeting period.

Students should provide a self-addressed envelope (appropriate size and postage) to the instructor so project/paper can be returned.

Other: (explain)

NOTE: Papers will not be available for pick up from the Education Office.

**NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.
Therefore, regular attendance is required.**

COMM 5110.01 - Birkman

To: Students taking Folklore for Four Credit Hours

From: Marlene Birkman

Re: Requirements: Additional

1. Preview and make notes on six Campbell videos, *The Power of Myth*. Place notes in course notebook.
2. Complete in some detail at least five sections in family notebook.
3. Interview informant about one topic in folklore. Tape and analyze according to Brunvard (Refer to written models for analysis format.)