

# Introduction to Folklore Studies (SCAND 230/CLIT 230), Fall Quarter 2020

Instructor: Guntis Šmidchens, [guntiss@uw.edu](mailto:guntiss@uw.edu); Office Hours: MW before and after class, and by appointment

First class meeting live (synchronous)

Wednesday, September 30, 12:30-2:20 pm (Seattle time, PST)

A Zoom link will be posted on Canvas. Please log in early, to make sure the connection is working.

Problems getting into the meeting? Write to [help@uw.edu](mailto:help@uw.edu)

- **On the first day of class (Wednesday Sept 30)**, the class meets online for the whole two hours, 12:30-2:20 pm (Seattle time, PST). A Zoom link will be posted in the Modules section of the Canvas website.
- **On all other days, the meeting time is split into two parts:**  
12:30-1:20 – Optional “open office hours” (see below).  
1:20-2:20 – Required live (synchronous) meeting.\* A recording will be available in Canvas.
- During “open office hours” (12:30-1:20), the online meeting room is open. You may...
  - drop in for questions/discussion about the class, the weather, etc.;
  - or use this hour to watch the recorded lectures (see below);
  - or prepare for the live meeting at 1:20.
- There will also be **two recorded (asynchronous) lectures per week**, to be viewed before the live meetings.

## 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: As it passes from person to person, from generation to generation, from place to place, folklore adapts to new contexts.

This class will focus on **traditional literature**:

- **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 will encounter classic tales as retold from Greek Antiquity to current American films.
- **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**.
- Traditional **poetry**. **Proverbs** are short traditional poems that encapsulate deep, powerful advice. Longer poems, **songs**, 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".

Folklore has existed since humans began talking many thousands of years ago...

It is widespread, performed by millions of humans in all of 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!

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\* 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](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/) (<https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/>). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form](https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/) (<https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/>).

## 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 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

- 25% Weekly online multiple choice/short answer quizzes (open book).
- 10% Contributions to class discussions: two assigned posts (one is also presented orally in class)
- 50% Four writing assignments, revised and submitted as a portfolio.
- 15% Peer review/responses to classmates’ written assignments

## Required Readings

- Film, **Into the Woods**. Directed by Rob Marshall. Disney Studios 2014. (2 hours) Rent online, \$2.99: [Disney](#), [Amazon](#), Netflix, etc.
- 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)
- Alan Dundes, International Folkloristics [[e-book at the UW Library](#)]
- Other readings available on the class website

## Assignments

### Eleven Quizzes (25%)

Remember examples (story endings, key characters, etc.); folklorists and their ideas; and definitions of basic concepts.

- How to study for quizzes: (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; 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!

### Two contributions to Class Discussions – live and written (10%)

You will be assigned two lectures—one live (Zoom) and one recorded (Panopto). After watching the lectures, post a comment with a concise & precise (about 50 words) summary of what was that lecture’s “takeaway”, and/or your thoughts on the lecture – let’s see how your post stimulates online discussion! Other students may see different things.

- During the live lecture, you must also be ready to talk! You’ll be asked to summarize or comment on reading assignments, helping prompt class discussions. When discussions break up into smaller groups, all students must participate and talk.

### Four Peer reviews (15%)

Read the classmate’s work that Canvas assigns to you. 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 analyzes a variant of “Cinderella”, as told by John Doe”). Then respond to their analysis. Did they miss an important idea that was discussed in class? Do you see other interesting details in the text?

- If they missed something in the directions, please let them know right away (for example, in Assignment 1, maybe they forgot to say what is shared; in assignment 2, maybe they did not look at the Type number, etc.). Your comments will help them improve the essay before they hand in the final portfolio in December.

## Four 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).

### Assignment 1 (due Saturday, October 3): Comparative analysis of a classic folktale in a new film version:

- A. Read the following four tales ([Cinderella](#), [Rapunzel](#), [Red Riding Hood](#), and [Jack & the Beanstalk](#)); then watch this weekend's film: *Into the Woods* (2 hours long), directed by Rob Marshall, Disney Studios 2014. Rent online, \$2.99, from [Disney](#), [Amazon](#), Netflix, or other provider. Use the table (attached in Canvas) to **take notes and compare** variant plots.
- B. Focus on one folktale, and **summarize (125-250 words)** how it is adapted in the film: what specific details are shared, and what is different in the variants? Why would the filmmaker borrow an old plot? How do the changes reflect the filmmaker's worldview?

### Assignment 2 (due October 24): Comparative analysis of a folktale.

- A. Create a **variant of a folktale** 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 use audio or video, upload it to canvas separately ("embedded" files don't work in Canvas). Extra credit if you transcribe the story's words and add them to your written essay.
- 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 Two.

### Assignment 3 (due November 14): Comparative analysis of a legend.

- A. Create a **variant of a legend** 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, create a video, sculpture, etc.). For audiovisual examples, write (in words a short summary of the picture, recording or video (extra credit if you transcribe audio, word for word)
  - If it's a picture, copy-paste it into your essay. If audio or video, upload it to canvas separately ("embedded" files don't work in Canvas). Extra credit if you transcribe the story's words and add them to your written essay.
- B. **Annotate** this variant (125-250 words): **Context**: connect the text to its tradition, its performer & performer's repertoire, and audience & their **beliefs**. **Text**: Point out significant *motifs*; note connections between the text and people, places, things in the performer's context. **Texture**: Note traditional patterns; comment on performance style. Add comparative notes and/or **interpretations** based on ideas or examples from Module Three.

### Assignment 4 (due December 5): Comparative analysis of an oral poem/song.

- A. Record (audio or video) a **variant of an oral poem** (song, rhyme, proverb, etc.). You can record yourself or another person speaking or singing. Do not cut them short, because ideally, they will also say something about the song. **Transcribe** the text, including spoken comments. Upload the recording separately.
- B. **Annotate** this variant (125 words): **Texture**: Note traditional patterns; comment on performance style. **Text**: Explain meanings that the performer and/or audience connects to the words. **Context**: connect the text to its tradition(s), and to the performer and audience and their **worldviews**. Add comparative notes and/or **interpretations** based on ideas or examples from Module Four.
- C. After you submit this assignment, **watch the movie** "Rapture," assigned in Module 5, and read William Wiggins' interpretive notes & interview transcripts. Here is an extended example of what can be done with this assignment. Note how Wiggins comments on texture, text, and context, and how he connects the songs to the singers' worldviews, and engages words spoken by the singers in his interpretations. Think about how the methods followed in **your** essay compare to work done by this pathfinder in oral poetry research, and start planning your final revisions of Assignments 2, 3, and 4.

### Assignment 5 (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 two what you wrote in part (A):
  - Add your revised, final versions of Assignments 2-4. Please resubmit audio & video recordings.

## Lecture and meeting schedule

(Two lectures per day, one recorded on Panopto & the other live on Zoom). Read assignments listed under a lecture before watching the lecture. Changes are possible: Follow the “Modules” section in Canvas for updates.

## Module 1 (Sept 30-Oct 3): Introduction

### Week 1, September 30-October 3: What is folklore studies?

#### Wednesday: Diving right into folklore studies

1-1 Recorded Panopto lecture (watch before or after class): How to do this class

1-2 Live Zoom Lecture (in-class discussion about future readings): What is folklore? What is folklore studies? What are folktales?

→ Background reading:

- McNeill, Chapters 1 and 2 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; Issue 1 of *Journal of American Folklore* (1888). [[Link to e-journal](#)]
- Folktales collected from oral tradition by Ludis Šmidchens in 1928: “Godfather Death”, “Glass Mountain”

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

#### October 3: Written Assignment #1

- Assignment #1 due Saturday, Oct 3, at midnight: comparative analysis of a folktale adapted in film.
- Read the following four tales ([Cinderella](#), [Rapunzel](#), [Red Riding Hood](#), and [Jack & the Beanstalk](#)); then watch this weekend's film: *Into the Woods* (2 hours long), directed by Rob Marshall, Disney Studios 2014. Rent online, \$2.99, from [Disney](#), [Amazon](#), Netflix, or other provider. Use the table (attached in Canvas) to **take notes and compare** variant plots.
- Focus on one folktale, and summarize (125-250 words) how it is adapted in the film: what specific details are shared, and what is different in the variants? Why would the filmmaker borrow an old plot? How do the changes reflect the filmmaker's worldview?

## Module 2 (Oct 5-25): Folktales

### Week 2 (October 5-9): Folktales. Variants & sources of folktale traditions

#### Monday: Origin and Diffusion of Story Texts

2-1 Recorded Panopto Lecture: Tools for International Comparative Study of Folktales

- Read (before class) variants of [Tail fisher](#), and variants recorded by Richard Dorson, published 1956.
- Review weekend film, *Into the Forest*, and stories.
- Background (optional expansion): Chapters by Krohn and Sydow in [International Folkloristics](#), pages 37-46, 137-52.
- Resources: [Uther introduction to the Type Index](#);
  - [examples of ATU Types](#) (1,2,310,328, 333, 425,480,510,530 etc.);
  - alternate [Type descriptions by Thompson](#) (same numbers, different descriptions)
  - and [Motif-Index of Folk Literature \(UW login required\)](#)

2-2 Live Zoom Meeting: How to do comparative folklore research

- Read (before class): McNeill Chapter 2, “What do folklorists do” pages 20-36 in *Folklore Rules* [[e-book in the UW Library](#)]
- Read (before class): variants of [Cinderella](#) (see in particular numbers 2, 3, 4, and 20),
- and variants from China and Finland
  - Resource: Aarne Type 510

→ In-class exercise: remembering tales. Try to remember/summarize the folktales we've read.

#### Wednesday: Storytellers in Context

2-3 Recorded Panopto Lecture: Discovery of storytellers, storytelling traditions and storytelling communities

- Boris & Yuri Sokolov, in [International Folkloristics](#), pages 73-82.

- Optional background: Folktales told by Medvedev (recorded by Sokolovs) and Vinokurova (recorded by Azadovskii)
- Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (1935) 3-6 & 42-63; focus on story by Julius Henry ([Eatonville FL](#)), p. 45-50.
  - Optional, fun to compare: Olav Austad, “The Fortune Teller,” in [All the World’s Reward](#), pages 91-96.
- Richard Dorson (1949). [Polish Tales from Joe Woods](#). *Western Folklore*, 8(1), 25-52. Focus on tales #1 and #4 (pages 28-33 and 39-47). Optional expansion: See also his 1956 notes on Black storytelling in America and storyteller J.D. Suggs.

2-4 Live Zoom Lecture: Storytelling Style. Who are the audiences?

- (before class): Read and/or listen:
- Winther, Pancake House (1823).
- Grimm, Hansel and Gretel (and Judie Eddington video retelling, 19 min)
- Jane Muncy ([Hyden KY](#)), “Merrywise” rough transcript, published text and [audio recording](#), (5½ min)
  - Optional background, [Lecture by Carl Lindahl about Muncy, Merrywise, and the folklorist Leonard Roberts](#)

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

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

## Week 3 (October 12-16) Folktale Texture & Meaning

### Monday: Storytelling Texture

2-5 Panopto: Style and Structure of oral narratives, and magic tales

- Background, Olrik and Propp in [International Folkloristics](#), pages 83-98; and 119-130. **Focus on Propp’s 31 actions, pages 122-123.**
- (optional: Re-read folktales from earlier reading assignments, to see if or how they mesh with Olrik & Propp’s ideas.)

2-6 Zoom: Case study of “Dragonslayer”, and accordion technique

- [Grimm 2 brothers](#)
- Swedish 3 swords
  - Resources: Stith Thompson on Type 300; and ATU Type 300

→ In-class: Remembering tale structures: Can you retell compressed or expanded variants of the tales we’ve read?

### Wednesday: Folktale Meanings

2-7 Panopto: Interpreting Folktales

- Danish folktale [King Lindorm](#)
- Clarissa Pinkola Estes, “Bluebeard” (and audio recording)
  - Background: Bettelheim *Uses of Enchantment* (excerpts) and Holbek “Quest for Meaning” [\[Link\]](#)

2-8 Zoom: What do folktales mean (for their tellers)?

- Three variants of Snake Husband: [Enchanted Brahman’s Son](#), Snake Prince, and (Film): Egle, Queen of Snakes (Lithuanian folktale) (7 min)

→ In-Class: Retelling folktales: Can you retell folktale episodes in the oral style?

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

## Week 4 (October 19-23) Moving on from folktales to Legends

### Monday: Folktales and Myths, ancient and national

2-9 Panopto: Folktales and Myths, ancient and national

- 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](#)
- Norwegian Legends about King Olaf (59.1-59.5) pages 339-343 in [Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend](#);
  - Background: Jacob Grimm, on relation between folktales, legends, and Viking mythology
- The [boy on the glass mountain](#), a national hero of Latvia, and videoclip from *Golden Horse*.
  - 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.

2-10 Zoom: Folklore and fakelore in National Myths

- Paintings of Estonian national hero [Linda](#) (see also the [stones she carried](#) and the [fortress mountain she built](#))
  - Holger the Dane (number 57.1) pages 331-332, in [Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend](#); see also the famous [Danish sculpture](#) by Hans Peder Pedersen-Dan.
  - 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*.
- In-class: Add real-world details to convert a folktale into a myth!

### Wednesday: Myth-like legends. Collecting stories, writing a folk history

2-11 Panopto: Is there a folk in the city?

- McNeill, Chapter 3, "Types of Folklore," pages 37-64 in *Folklore Rules* [[e-book at UW Library](#)]
- Richard Dorson, excerpts from *Land of the Millrats* (1981): Introduction, pages 1-4, "Juan Gomes, Mexican Urban Man" 147-158; "Black Outlooks" 165-174.

2-12 Zoom: Studying Black storytelling in context

- [Billie McCrea memories of Emancipation](#), recorded in 1940 by John Lomax (audio 8 min & transcript in pdf)
- Kathrine Morgan, "[Caddy Buffers](#)"
- 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: The power (and importance) of stories.

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

### Due October 24: Assignment #2, Legend

- Create a **variant of a folktale** 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 use audio or video, upload it to canvas separately ("embedded" files don't work in Canvas). Extra credit if you transcribe the story's words and add them to your written essay.
- 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 this Module.

## Module 3 (Oct 26-Nov 26): Legends

### Week 5 (October 26-30) Introducing the Legend

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

3-1 Panopto: Discovering international legends. Truth-seekers vs. folklorists

- McNeil, "Things We Say," in *Folklore Rules* [[e-book in the UW Library](#)], pages \_\_\_\_
- Watch: [Tales of the supernatural](#) (26 min). Note how these storytelling traditions differ from folktales.
- Watch: Excerpt, Candyman (8 min)
- Watch: [Jan Brunvand on Letterman 1987](#) (12 min)
  - References: [Encyclopedia of Urban Legends](#); (skim this book! see also definitions of legend, pages 173-177); and [Motif-Index of Folk Literature](#)
  - Background: Contemporary legends collection project in Latvia, 1992.

3-2 Zoom: Functions of Legends

- Justin Oswald, "Camel Spider Stories," pages 38-57 in [Warrior Ways](#) (2012)
- Plague legends, Chapter 60 (pages 344-351) in [Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend](#)

→ In-class: Legends you have heard...

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

3-3 Panopto: Memorates vs fabulate, and how believable are legend texts?

- 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.

3-4 Zoom: Doing legends (ostensive tradition) – where’s the text?

- E. Bird, *Playing with Fear: Interpreting the Adolescent Legend Trip* [\[Link\]](#)
- Ann Landers newspaper column, Halloween 1994.

→ In-class: Share legends you’ve heard or done; transform class reading assignment legends into memorates...

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

## Week 6 (Nov 2-6): Shared & Clashing Worldviews

### Monday: Legends – Believable ... in a liminal landscape?

3-5 Panopto: Who are the legend tellers, where & how?

- Two Irish fairy legends collected by Henry Glassie [texts and recordings on class website]
- Scandinavian fairy legends, Chapters 47 and 53 (pages 222-237, 272-274) in [Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend](#)
- Linda Dégh, [UFOs and how folklorists should look at them](#). *Fabula* 18,1 (1977), pages 242-248.
- Background: Thomas Bullard, [UFO Abduction Reports](#). *Journal of American Folklore* (1989)

3-6 Zoom: Creating believable stories

- Watch: Lynn McNeill, [“Folklore doesn’t meme what you think it memes”](#) (18 Dec 2015) (11 min)
  - Read “online groups” in *Folklore Rules* [\[e-book in the UW Library\]](#), pages 80-86.
- Read: Andrew Peck, [“Tall, Dark and Loathsome”](#) (2015)

→ In-class: What texts, textures and contexts add believability to a legend?

### Wednesday: The Legend Debate

3-7 Panopto: Fear of trolls and werewolves, real or not?

- Read McNeill's chapter “Things we believe” in *Folklore Rules* [\[e-book in the UW Library\]](#), pages 56-61.
- John Lindow (2014). “Epilogue,” pages 138-143 in *Trolls: An unnatural history*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Scandinavian werewolf legends in [Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend](#), p. 74-80
- Excerpt from Harry Potter, *The Prisoner of Azkaban*; and videoclip from the movie.
- Excerpt from Meyer, *New Moon* (chapter 12).
  - Background: Brent Stypczynski. (2010). [Wolf in professor's clothing: J. K. Rowling's werewolf as educator.\(Critical essay\)](#). *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, 21(1), 57.

3-8 Live: 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 witch legends (numbers 34.3, 36.1, 38.1, 38.6, 39.3, 43.1) in [Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend](#), 157-200

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

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

## Week 7 (Nov 9-13): Legends to Poetry, Hunting for worldviews

### Monday: Legends, worldviews and poetry

3-9 Panopto: Hunting for folksongs, stumbling into ostensive legends

- Video: Alan Lomax Goes North (24 min)
  - Background: James Leary, “Alan Lomax Goes North”, pages 185-210 in *Folksongs of Another America* (**focus on the Finnish incantations**, pages 206-210).
- Lea Virtanen, “Incantations,” in *Finnish Folklore*, pages 179-186.

3-10 Zoom: Traditional worldview made explicit – Proverbs and their performers

- Šmidchens, Five Proverbs of a Latvian Immigrant, *Lituanus* (2019), pages 16-31.
  - Reference Tool, [Matti Kuusi Index of Types of International Proverbs](#), and 3-page summary of this resource.
  - Background: Roger Abrahams, “Proverbs” in *Folklore and Folklife* (1972), pages 117-127.

→ In-class exercise: Discuss proverbs you have heard in the “natural context”

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

## Wednesday, Nov 11: Veterans Day Holiday

### Due Nov 14: Assignment #3, Legend

- A. Create a **variant of a legend** 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, create a video, sculpture, etc.). For audiovisual examples, write (in words a short summary of the picture, recording or video (extra credit if you transcribe audio, word for word)
  - If it's a picture, copy-paste it into your essay. If audio or video, upload it to canvas separately ("embedded" files don't work in Canvas). Extra credit if you transcribe the story's words and add them to your written essay.
- B. **Annotate** this variant (125-250 words): **Context:** connect the text to its tradition, its performer & performer's repertoire, and audience & their **beliefs**. **Text:** Point out significant *motifs*; note connections between the text and people, places, things in the performer's context. **Texture:** Note traditional patterns; comment on performance style. Add comparative notes and/or **interpretations** based on ideas or examples from this Module.

## Module 4 (Nov 16-Dec 5): Folksongs / Oral Poetry

### Week 8 (Nov 16-20) Discovery of Folksongs

#### Monday: Voice of humankind in songs

##### 4-1 Panopto: Voice of Humankind in Songs

- Watch: Land of Songs (60 min) – weekend film.
  - Background: Conversation with Aldona Watts
- Šmidchens, Notes on Folk Song Fieldwork in the Baltic
  - Background: Šmidchens, "Herder's Discovery of Baltic folksongs", pages 24-49 in [The Power of Song](#) (2014); and "[Herder and Lithuanian Folksongs](#)," in Lituanus (2010) (in both of these, **focus on quoted song texts**)
- UNESCO: [What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?](#) and [Dive in!](#)
  - Resource: [Global Jukebox](#) (Alan Lomax Archive) (see also [Demonstration Video](#))

##### 4-2 Zoom: How to read an oral poem

- John Miles Foley, "Four Scenarios" in *How to Read an Oral Poem* (2002)
  - Background: "Ten \*Proverbs";
  - Listen and read Foley's transcript, [Lynn Procope, "Elemental Woman"](#)
- Adam Bradley, "Rap Poetry 101" in *Book of Rhymes: The Poetics of Hip Hop* (2009).
  - Listen: Marc Bamuthi Joseph, "[You have the rite](#)" [TED 2019]; click on "transcript" .. where's the poetry?
  - Listen: Kokayi Issa, "[Living while black](#)" [Posted April 4, 2020]

→ In-class: Reading poetry, giving voice to texts.

#### Wednesday: Ballads & epics, history and national identity

##### 4-3 Panopto: Finding history in ballads and epics: National Revivals

- Selected Danish ballads: Valdemar & Tove; and Death of Stig the Knight;
  - Background example, "Sivard and Brunild", chapter by Alexander Prior (1860)
- "Sampo" (Finnish folksong text), sung by Iivana Iivanainen, 1877
- "Kantele" (Finnish folksong) 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%);
  - Background: Lauri Honko, "The Kalevala Process"

##### 4-4 Zoom: Deciphering old folksong texts: What does a ballad mean?

- 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](#).
- 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);
  - Background: A. Taylor, "Edward & Svend i Rosengård"; and D. Atkinson, "Edward, Incest & Intertextuality"

→ In-class: Giving voice to old texts

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

## Week 9 (Nov 23-25) Folksong Traditions

### Monday: What does singing do? (functions of folksongs)

4-5 Panopto: An origin of songs (work songs), and changing contexts

- Lithuanian Hay-Cutting Song [text and audio on class website]
  - [Photo of hay-cutters in Lithuania in the 1920s](#) and [More photos of Lithuanian hay-cutters](#)
- Listen to Alan Lomax field recording, and read Claire Anderson's lesson plan, "[All in a Day's Work: Rhythm and Work](#)" published by The Association for Cultural Equity.
- Library of Congress, [Traditional Work Songs](#).
  - Review Zora Neal Hurston's notes on "John Henry", under Lecture 2-3
  - Background, Pascal Michon, "[Rhythm as Form of Working Process](#)", Rhuthmos, 11 March 2019

4-6 Zoom: Functions and meanings of songs

- Burns, "Where is Jody Now," pages 79-98 in [Warrior Ways](#) (2012)
    - [videoclip from Battleground](#), mentioned 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](#).
  - Soldier songs in the Baltic
- In-class: Voicing songs and worldviews

### Wednesday: Oral poetry, old and new

4-7 Panopto: American songs

- 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 concluding song number 111, "Keep your hand on that plow")
- Selected Scandinavian emigrant songs.
- Amy Whorf McGuighan, "Take me out to the ballgame"
  - <https://youtu.be/HnHV5FaqvEs>; and <https://youtu.be/8m0KIBG-zIE>

4-8 Zoom: Children's rhymes, old and new interpretations

- H. Carrington Bolton. [The Counting-out Rhymes of Children. A Study in Folk-Lore](#). The Journal of American Folklore, 1,1 (1888), 31-37.
  - Kenneth Goldstein, "Strategy un Counting Out", in [International Folkloristics](#), pages 231-244.
- In-class: Remembering counting out rhymes; what are "American" folksongs?

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

## Weekend (Nov 26-29): Thanksgiving Holiday

## Week 10 (Nov 30-Dec 4) The Importance of Doing Folksong Fieldwork

### Monday: Songs and Politics

4-9 Panopto: Baltic nonviolent singing revolution

- [Baltic folklore at the Smithsonian festival 1998](#) (see 60 min video on this page)
- Šmidchens, "Songs Meet Violence" (297-306) and "What does singing do?" (321-326) in [Power of Song](#).
- Background: "Balts Speak to America" (7-23) in [Power of Song](#).

4-10 Zoom: American folksong revival and Civil Rights

- [Tracing the Journey of We Shall Overcome](#) (watch interviews with Pete Seger and Jamila Jones)
  - 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. **Special attention to songs & poetry!!**
    - Background: Listen to Lift Every Voice (find variants on YouTube!)
- In-class: What does singing do?

## Wednesday: Back to the Field

4-11 Panopto: Back to the Field: Studying North European midsummer traditions

- Background: Latvian midsummer songs
- McNeill Chapter 1, "What is Folklore" in Folklore Rules [[e-book at UW Library](#)], 1-19. Review also Chapter 2, which we read in Week 2.

4-12 Zoom: Back to the Field: Civil Rights Movement, continued

- William Wiggins "[Juneteenth: A Red Spot Day on the Texas Calendar](#)." Pages 236-252 in Abernethy, F. (1996). *Juneteenth Texas: Essays in African-American folklore*. Denton, Tex.: University of North Texas Press.
- 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, for example, [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.

→ In-class: 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 Dec 5: Assignment #4, Folksong / Oral Poetry

- Record (audio or video) a **variant of an oral poem** (song, rhyme, proverb, etc.). You can record yourself or another person speaking or singing. Do not cut them short, because ideally, they will also say something about the song. **Transcribe** the text, including spoken comments. Upload the recording separately.
- **Annotate** this variant (125 words): **Texture**: Note traditional patterns; comment on performance style. **Text**: Explain meanings that the performer and/or audience connects to the words. **Context**: connect the text to its tradition(s), and to the performer and audience and their **worldviews**. Add comparative notes and/or **interpretations** based on ideas or examples from this Module.
- After you submit this assignment, **watch the movie** "Rapture," assigned in Module 5, and read William Wiggins' interpretive notes & interview transcripts. Here is an extended example of what can be done with this assignment. Note how Wiggins comments on texture, text, and context, and how he connects the songs to the singers' worldviews, and engages words spoken by the singers in his interpretations. Think about how the methods followed in **your** essay compare to work done by this pathfinder in oral poetry research, and start planning your final revisions of Assignments #2, #3, and #4.

## Module 5 (Dec 7-12): Conclusion

### Week 11 (Dec 7-11) Studying complex folk traditions

#### Monday: Celebrating songs and worldview

5-1 Panopto: Folklorists as culture brokers; celebrating songs & worldview

- Richard Kurin, "[Why we do the festival](#)" (1989)
- Watch "Smithsonian Festival Introduction" (12 min) video on [this information page](#);
  - Background, from our backyard here in Seattle: Northwest Folklife [\[video\]](#) and [\[website\]](#)
- William Wiggins, [Rapture](#) (video, 60 min)
  - Resource: [William Wiggins interpretive notes to the performance](#).
  - Background: Wiggins [interview transcripts](#)

5-2 Zoom: Putting Black Songs on Display, 1976-2020

- Read: William Wiggins, "[Rapture](#)" at the 1976 Smithsonian Folklife Festival
- [Wiggins 1974 dissertation](#), interviews, Volume 2, Texts: #40 (page 38), #53 (page 49); #56 (page 50-51); #95 (page 84-85); #104 (page 90); #151 (page 120-121); notice poetry and songs, and also other verbal, material, customary, and belief traditions. How do the two research projects- "Rapture" and "Juneteenth" intersect?

- Alison Martin, “Black Music Matters,” pages 70-85, in Portia K. Maultsby, ed., [Black Lives Matter and Music](#). Indiana University Press, 2018.
    - Marisa Lang, [“Go-go is signed into law as the official music of D.C.”](#) *Washington Post*, 19 February 2020.
- In-class: Where’s the folklore? How do we find it and study it? Why?

### Wednesday: Back to the roots. Folk groups.

5-3 Panopto: Who are the folk?

- Background: Smidchens, “Immigrant & Ethnic folklore”
- Smidchens, [“Latvian folk history and Family Stories in America”](#) (1987)

5-4 Zoom: What folk(s) are you?

- McNeill, Chapter 4, “Types of Folk Groups” in *Folklore Rules* [[e-book at UW Library](#)], 65-88.
- Stephen Zeitlin, Sandra Gross, Holly Cutting-Baker, and Amy Kotkin, [Family folklore, Smithsonian Folklife Festival 1976](#)
- Stephen Zeitlin, “Intimacy of Language: Poetry in Family Expressions” pages 35-44 in [The Poetry of Everyday Life](#) (2016)

→ In-class: How many folks are you, and the people you study?

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

### Due Saturday, December 12: Assignment #5: 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, connecting them to (A):
  - Add your revised, final versions of Assignments 2-4. Please resubmit audio & video recordings.

### Final Exam Thursday, Dec 17, 8:30-10:30 am: Why study folklore, and How?

→ This will be a group exam, discussed and written in groups

- (read/watch before class):
- McNeill, “Conclusion,” in *Folklore Rules*, [[e-book at UW Library](#)], 89-90
- Other readings to be announced