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General Education Course Proposal

Proposed Course: Hum 11B Folklore in Contemporary Life Units: 3
Prefix No. Title
Department: Foreign Languages School: Arts & Humanities

GE Category (Indicate one category only):

Foundation: A1___; A2___; A3___; B4___
Breadth: B1___; B2___; C1___; C2___; D___; E___
Integration: B___; C✓; D___; International/Multicultural___

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Existing Course ; Revised Course ___; New Course ___
Course Included in Current GE Program

New courses require the Undergraduate Course Proposal form in addition to this form.
Revised courses require the Undergraduate Course Change Request in addition to this form.

Proposed catalog description: Limit course description to 40 words using succinct phrases. Include prerequisites, limitations, lecture/lab hours. Indicate former course number, e.g., (Former Biol 105)

Interdisciplinary study of the role of folklore in contemporary life, its power to communicate critical issues through expressive culture, e.g., jokes, legends, folksongs, graphic arts and festival; special focus on the intellectual currents influencing the study of folklore. Prerequisite: completion of Foundation and Breadth requirements (Former IntD 118).

Enrollment limit per section: 50
Expected number of sections per semester – Year 1 2; Year 3 2

Attachments:

1. A statement presenting the ways in which this course meets the Specifications provided in the appropriate section of the General Education Policy as well as in the Policies for Inclusion and Evaluation of General Education Courses.
2. A statement of elements common to all sections of this course, identifying content, objectives, required student activities, grading policy, representative texts, and an approximate schedule for the course. Required student activities include such things as papers, research projects, homework, laboratory and/or studio performance, recitations, participation, attendance, and exams.
3. A typical syllabus for a particular offering of the course.
4. Any special cost factors associated with this course.

Approval for Inclusion in General Education

Judy 11/14/00
Department Chair Date

Robert D. Merrill 4/23/01
School Curriculum Committee Date

Luis J. Bortz 4.26.01
School Dean Date

Robert D. Merrill 5/2/03
General Education Subcommittee Date

J. Echeverria 5/2/03
Associate Provost Date
M/S TA 54

Forward Original and TWELVE copies to:
Associate Provost for Academic Affairs,

ATTACHMENT #2:
General Syllabus, Hum 118: Folklore in Contemporary Life
Statement of Elements Common to all Sections

In order to conform to GE policy and to provide pedagogical continuity, all sections of Hum 118, Folklore in Contemporary Life, will include the following elements—keeping in mind, of course, the principle of academic freedom and the right of the instructor to make evaluative decisions vis-à-vis course content and approach.

I. Course Goals

Every section of Hum 118 will include the following goals:

1. To familiarize the student with the field of folkloristics by examining the expressive culture of concern to folklorists—verbal art, folksong and music, material art forms, and customs;
2. To instill in students an appreciation for the aesthetic dimensions of folklore (including folk music)—its unique texts and textures, literary (and musical) devices, rhetorical functions;
3. To instill in students an appreciation for the dynamic capacity of artistic folk culture to symbolically articulate the most fundamental beliefs and values of contemporary societies;
4. To acquaint students with the various intellectual currents that have influenced the study of folk music and lore and thereby help them appreciate the contributions each of these currents has made toward understanding the significance of music and folklore in everyday life;
5. To use the study of folklore as a means of enabling the student to think critically about social and cultural issues and thereby understand the complex ways in which people use expressive culture to impose meaning upon experience;
6. To study folklore and folk music as expressive vehicles that enable us to apprehend and value cultural diversity.

II. Course Content—Themes and Topics

All sections of Hum 118 will contain the following themes and topics as part of their content:

1. Folklore **materials, genres, forms** (e.g., folktale, ballad, folksong, music, legend, myth, ritual, custom, belief, proverb, material culture, etc.)
2. Folklore **documentation and collection** (e.g., theories, styles, history, examples, limitations and opportunities, development)
3. Folklore **theory** (select from: diffusionism, Functionalism, Structuralism, psychology, feminism, Marxism, ethnicity, poststructuralism, postmodernism, performance, semiotics, ethics, advocacy, application.)
4. The **interdisciplinary nature** of folklore
 - a. Folklore as symbolic “equipment for living”
 - b. Relationship between folklore, folk group, ethnicities, social life, and culture
 - c. Relationship between folklore, popular and elite cultures
5. **Artistic aspects** of folklore
 - a. Folklore as artistic communication
 - b. Aesthetic dimensions of folklore
 - c. Folklore texts and contexts; folklore as cultural performance

The following are themes/topics from which the instructor will select:

1. Diffusionist theories of folklore
2. Functionalist theories of folklore + case studies
3. Structuralist and Semiotic approaches to folklore
4. Psychology and folklore + case studies
5. Ethnic folklore
6. Folklore and feminist theory
7. Marxism and folklore
8. Folklore and nationalism
9. Folklore, modernity and postmodernism
10. Folklore Materials
11. Folklore documentation
12. Applied folklore and advocacy through folklore

III. Required Student Activities

The following are the required student activities, which also form the basis for individual grading:

1. Regular attendance—a percentage of the grade is based on this;
2. Class discussion and timely reading of assigned texts;
3. Quizzes (variable number) designed to evaluate students' mastery of readings and lectures;
4. At least two major exams;
5. A written research project, at least 2500 words in length and employing appropriate scholarly methods;

IV. Grading Policy

In keeping with the principle of academic freedom, this proposal allows the instructor maximum flexibility to formulate grading policy. However, in accordance with grading policies, the instructor will tailor policy to correspond with required student activities. Each syllabus will state explicitly the instructor's grading policy, with specific numerical weight given each assignment, in the form of points earned per assignment and their relation to the instructor's grading scale. (See the model syllabus for an example of grading policy.)

V. Representative Texts

Selecting materials for a class like Hum 118 must necessarily be a personal matter, as an ample corpus of high-quality texts exist, both book-length and articles in scholarly journals. As the list of topics covered suggests, diversity in theoretical and topical orientation is the rule in folkloristics. The matter of personal choice cannot, therefore, be denied, and only the individual instructor can ultimately decide the choice of materials—as long as they are within the constraints listed under Course Content. The following are thus recommended texts and do not include journal articles, a collection of which could constitute the entire reading material for a given section of the course (as in the model syllabus).

- Bendix, Regina. In Search of Authenticity: The Foundation of Folklore Studies
Bauman, Richard. Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments
Oring, Elliot. Folk Groups and Genres: An Introduction
Oring, Elliot. Folk Groups and Genres: A Reader
Peña, Manuel. Musica Tejana
Titon, Jeff and Mark Slobin. Worlds of Music
Toelken, Barre. The Dynamics of Folklore

VI. Approximate Schedule

Scheduling for Hum 118 will depend on the individual instructor; however, schedules shall reflect the themes and topic as outlined under Course Content, with sufficient time allocated for adequate coverage of the materials selected for study as outlined in the syllabus. Note that any given class session will be devoted both to primary (the folklore) and secondary (the folkloristics, theory) aspects, and while this or that lecture will concentrate on a particular theoretical aspect, many others will play a role in the discussion. Please see the Model Syllabus.

VII. Special Costs: There are no special costs attached to Hum 118.

ATTACHMENT #3a:

Model Syllabus
Proposed course: Hum 118 Folklore and Music in Contemporary Life
Proposed by: Manuel Peña & David Engle

Note: The specific topics, readings, class activities and grading policies outlined in this model syllabus may vary from those contained in an actual syllabus, e.g., the inclusion of Diffusions theories in lieu of Marxism.

Hum 118

Folklore in Contemporary Life (3 units, Upper-Division GE, Area C)

Office No. & Hs.

Prerequisites: Completion of Foundation and Breadth Requirements

Instructor

Semester, Year Mail

Syllabus

Course Summary

"The great contribution of folklore study... is that it crosses most disciplinary lines, tying all expressive forms together, and especially that it examines the artistic and creative efforts of all human beings, not just the elite...."

--William A. Wilson ("Folklore and the Humanities")

The study of folklore—folkloristics—concerns itself with the expressive culture of a given group—women, children, adolescents, men, occupational, ethnic or regional groups, and even entire nations. By expressive culture we refer to any form of verbal art, usually (though not always) orally transmitted—for example, jokes, legends, speech play, narrative myths, proverbs, riddles and other oral genres. Expressive culture also includes material folk arts such as weaving, quilting, costume, and architecture, and customary lore such as rituals, celebrations, proxemics, customs, and gestures. Converging with a closely related subdiscipline—ethnomusicology—folkloristics investigates yet another important area of expressive culture—folk song and music. In this course we examine both the development of modern folkloristics and the expressive culture that it studies. We shall direct particular attention to some of the intellectual currents, humanistic and interdisciplinary in nature, that influence the study of folklore in contemporary life—for example, developments in psychoanalysis, structuralism, feminism, the ethnography of communication and theories about ethnicity. Further, the works selected for study are noteworthy for the insights they yield toward understanding the symbolic, communicative aspects of folklore: its unique power to summarize key social issues within the compact bundles that make up expressive culture, whether it be a cycle of jokes about blondes, a corpus of corridos [ballads] about interethnic conflict, the blues, or a collection of UFO abduction legends. Folklore, then, is studied in this course not as a collection of "antiquities" or survivals from an earlier stage of human evolution, but as a vital artistic resource for communicating the essential values, concerns and anxieties of modern societies.

Course Goals

This course has the following as its goals:

1. to familiarize the student with the field of folkloristics by examining the expressive culture of concern to folklorists, i.e., verbal art forms, folksong and music, and material art forms;
2. to instill in the student an appreciation for the aesthetic dimensions of folklore—its unique shapes, literary and musical devices, and rhetorical qualities;
3. to instill in the student an appreciation for the dynamic capacity of expressive culture to symbolically express the most fundamental beliefs, values and sense of aesthetics of contemporary society;
4. to enable the student to recognize the various intellectual currents that have influenced folkloristics and thereby appreciate the contribution each has made toward understanding the significance of folklore in contemporary life;
5. to use the study of folklore as a means of enabling the student to think critically about social and cultural issues and thereby understand the complex ways in which people use expressive culture to impose meaning upon experience;
6. to study folklore as an expressive vehicle that enables us to apprehend and appreciate diverse cultures.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to undertake the following, with respect to the course goals:

1. Identify major folklore genres: legend, myth, proverb, joke, riddle, folksong and music, folktale, and festival;
2. Identify the linguistic and rhetorical devices employed by the various genres above to create their special aesthetic and sociocultural effects;
3. Identify major theories utilized by folklorists, e.g., functional, structural, Marxist, feminist, ethnic;
4. Trace the connection between the various folkloric genres, their rhetorical devices and the sociocultural contexts in which these genres are embedded (e.g., the “dumb-blond” joke-riddle and its contemporaneity with the women’s movement) and, thereby,
5. To draw specific conclusions about the role of folklore in the construction of social reality;
6. Describe associations between folklore and the expression of cultural diversity and/or conflict, as in, e.g., African American folk blues, the Mexican *corrido*, the “dumb-blond” and “elephant” jokes.

Schedule of Class Activities

I. Introduction: Culture, Mass & Popular Culture, Folklore

[Relationship of folklore to mass and popular culture; culture as a “system of symbols and their meanings”]

Week 1: Defining the Field

- J. Brunvand: “Introduction: The Field of Folklore”
- R. Bauman: “Introduction”
- A. Briggs: “Culture”

Week 2: Symbolic Aspects of Folklore: Text or Performance?

[Folklore as symbolic, artistic communication; aesthetic characteristics; folklore as cultural performance]

- R. Bauman: “Folklore”
- D. Ben Amos: “Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context”

II. The Functions of Folklore

Week 3: Functionalism and its Limitations

[Role of folklore in culture: as “mirror” and as “reversal” of culture; interpretive range of functionalism]

W. R. Bascom: “Four Functions of Folklore”

E. Oring: “Three Functions of Folklore”

Week 4: Case Studies: Legends and their Functions

[Role of “urban” and “belief” legends, their function as “summarizing” symbols for basic social values and anxieties; amusement function of legends]

L. Degh: “The ‘Belief Legend’ in Modern Society”

T. E. Bullard: “UFO Abduction Reports”

Week 5: Case Studies: Christmas and Easter Myths

[Role of Xmas and Easter Traditions as forms of “residual culture” that resist the principle of “exchange-value;” their function in reinforcing family bonds]

Cindy Dell Clark: “Christmas and Easter”

“Commerce, Family and Meaning”

III. Structuralist Folkloristics: Resolving Antinomies

Week 6: Structural Analyses

[Folklore as the aesthetic expression of fundamental mental structures; the binary form of such structures]

E. A. Hammel: “The Myth of Structural Analysis: Levi-Strauss and the Three Bears”

G. Gonos, et al.: “Anonymous Expression: A Structural View of Graffiti”

IV. Folklore and Human Psychology

Week 7: The Psychology of Jokes

[Humor as irony, surprise, trope; psychological function of humor—aggression, regression, projection]

Apte: “Humor”

R. Abrahams & A. Dundes: “Elephantasy and Elephanticide”

Week 8: The Psychology of Folktales

[psychological function of folktales and its interpretation: developmental psych. vs. structuralism]

Ben Amos: “Folktale”

A.C. Elms: “‘The Three Bears’: Four Interpretations”

Week 9: Sociopsychology of the “Carnavalesque”

[Sociopsychological aspects of festival—class repression; festival as catharsis]

Stoeltje: “Festival”

Bakhtin: “Laughter and Freedom”

Stallybrass and White: "Bourgeois Hysteria and the Carnavalesque"

V: Ethnicity and Folklore

Week 10: Ethnic Folklore and Music in Contemporary Life

[Folklore and music as artistic expressions of ethnic/racial identity and difference]

D. Evans: "Structure and Meaning in the Folk Blues"

Week 11: Folk Music and Ethnic Conflict

[Folk music as aesthetic expression of ethnic identity and interethnic conflict]

M. Peña: "The Texas-Mexican Conjunto"

VI. Folklore and Gender

Week 12: Challenges to Masculinity: The Feminist Voice

[Gender politics and folklore-genre nomenclature; feminine resistance to masculine categories]

J. Radner & S. Lanser: "The Feminist Voice: Strategies of Coding in Folklore and Literature"

A. Shuman: "Gender and Genre"

Week 13: Women's Folklore

[Feminist folkloric categories; gender, politics and the power of feminist artistic categories]

K. Turner: "Mexican American Home Altars"

J. B. Thomas: "Dumb Blondes, Dan Quayle & Hillary Clinton"

VII. Folklore and Marxism

Week 14: Class/Ethnic Resistance and the "Carnavalesque"

[Carnavalesque festival and humor as class resistance; aesthetic dimensions of the carnalesque]

Limón: "Carne, Carnales, and the Carnavalesque..."

Flores: "Los Pastores..."

(Review Bakhtin)

Week 15: Folklore and Gender-Class Conflict

[artistic and political dimensions of class-based humor and song about gender: men vs. women vs. class domination]

M. Peña: "Class, Gender & Machismo..."

M. Peña: "The Canción Ranchera"

Grading

Students can earn up to 100 points in this course. Grading is based on the following assignments:

3 Quizzes (short essay-type answers; 5 points each; total 15 points).

These are not pop quizzes. They will usually be announced the class meeting prior to the quiz. **Missed quizzes must be made up within 48 hours, no exceptions.**

Attendance (10 points)

Students earn these points by attending class regularly. Excessive absences (more 3 for MWF classes) will result in the loss of points, at the rate of 2 points per absence, until the full 10 points have been deducted.

Mid-Term Exam (essay-type answers; 25 points; date TBA)

Final Exam (multiple-choice questions; 25 points)

Research Project (35 points; date due TBA)

The research project is in partial fulfillment of GE writing requirements. It consists of a written paper, at least 12 pages long, double-spaced type (approximately 3000 words). The student will select his/her own topic, as long as it is related to some aspect of folklore/music. Students should consult with the instructor. The research project is to be approached from the same critical perspective used in the class, that is, the student should formulate an argument, or interpretive thesis, present the data, cite appropriate sources (at least four, drawn from scholarly journals or texts), and draw their conclusions on the basis of the data. The preferred style of documentation is that found in the Chicago Manual of Style (1993). A first draft will be due on [date]. The instructor will review and edit this draft for grammatical usage, thematic coherence and proper documentation. A student-instructor conference will follow, and then the paper will be returned to the student for final preparation. The final draft of the paper is due on [date]. More information on the research project will be forthcoming.

Reading Materials

A course packet containing the readings listed in the week-to-week schedule.

Other Information

Participation in this class is governed by the rules and regulations as set out in the California State University, Fresno Catalog, as these apply to student conduct, cheating, plagiarism and other pertinent matters. Students should consult Catalog for additional information.

Students with disabilities: Please consult with the instructor to arrange for the necessary accommodations to your particular disability.

[Note:
12 page paper (@250/pg.) 3000
6 pg. MidTerm (@150/pg.): 900
3 *1 pg quiz: 450
total words: 4350]