

## Folklore 235: Folklore and the Supernatural

Winter Quarter, 2015; Tuesday & Thursday, 12:00-1:20; Chapman 204

Professor Daniel Wojcik, 463 PLC; 346-3946; [dwojcik@uoregon.edu](mailto:dwojcik@uoregon.edu)

Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:30-2:45 p.m., Thursday, 1:30-2:30 & 5:45-6:30, or by appointment

### Required Texts:

Course Packet containing photocopied essays (available at the U.O. bookstore, 346-4331).

Online essays on Blackboard, listed under "Course Documents":

- \* Login to FLR 235 through your Blackboard account (<https://blackboard.uoregon.edu>);
- \* Click on "Course Documents";
- \* The readings are listed in the order in which they are assigned, with optional readings listed at the bottom of the page.

### Course Description:

This course introduces students to the research questions and theoretical models used by folklorists and other scholars in the study of supernatural beliefs, paranormal encounters, and popular spirituality. We will examine folk traditions involving the supernatural as these are practiced and "lived," focusing primarily on beliefs and practices that are informally learned and generally unsanctioned by institutional authorities. The course is organized to reflect particular topics and areas of research that have preoccupied folklorists and other theorists of supernatural belief, and we will explore the issues and perspectives that have informed their studies. The role of the supernatural in people's lives will be analyzed through the study of folk narratives, customs, rituals, ceremonies, and numinous experiences. Topics include apparitions, superstitions, spirit possession, angels, the afterlife, miraculous images, otherworldly journeys, near death experiences, dissociative states, vampires, zombies, apocalyptic prophecies, pilgrimage, and supernatural assault.

### Requirements:

Reading assignments are to be completed before the date scheduled for class discussion and should be read in the order in which they appear on the syllabus. All students are required to complete a midterm examination (40% of grade) and a final examination (40%). No make-up exams or incompletes will be given. Additional requirements include attendance, participation in discussion, and the completion of a fieldwork project (20%). Details for fulfilling these requirements will be announced in class.

### Learning outcomes:

- Identify, explain and apply basic concepts in folklore scholarship
- Demonstrate ability to conduct research on folklore topics and integrate research findings into speech and written presentations

- Identify, explain, and analyze diverse folklore forms in relationship to the historical, cultural, and social contexts in which they are performed, employing appropriate theoretical and methodological approaches
- Identify, explain, and critically analyze the role of folklore in community constitution, identity formation, conflict negotiation, and religious expression for diverse groups of people in the United States and globally

#### Attendance:

Class periods are used for discussions, lectures, small group assignments, writing, and other activities. Attendance is therefore mandatory and fundamental to your success in this course. If you have to miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain notes and materials. Excusable circumstances include: a death in the family, a serious illness with a doctor's note, ill children, observance of a religious holiday, and other university recognized conflicts. Be prepared to provide documentation. If excusable circumstances prevent your attendance at an exam or your turning in an assignment on time, inform me before or within 24 hours after the exam via e-mail, telephone, or a dated note in the department mailbox or beneath my office door (this requirement will be lifted in extreme circumstances). Student cannot make up exams due to unexcused absences. Late papers (not due to excusable circumstances) will drop one letter grade each day they are late.

#### Classroom Respect and Basic Course Rules:

- Arrive to class before class begins
- Put computers away (please see me if you have a documented disability that requires classroom computer use)
- Turn off cell phones and no text messaging
- Do not eat during class
- Be respectful in the classroom (raise your hand when asking a question, no private conversations during class, etc.)
- Lectures may not be copied, audio recorded, or videotaped in any manner unless you have documented a communication-related disability with the University and have received permission from the course instructor

Failure to comply with these rules will affect your grade.

#### Academic Honesty/Plagiarism:

All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this class. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases from books, articles, websites, archives, interviews etc.) must be properly acknowledged and documented. Any violations and plagiarism will be taken seriously and are recorded on student disciplinary records. To learn more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, consult the UO library's guide on plagiarism: <http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html>. If you are in doubt regarding any aspect of these issues as they pertain to this course, please consult with me before you complete any relevant requirements. To

learn about the consequences of academic dishonesty, consult the UO Student Conduct Code: <http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx>. The bottom line is: do not cheat, plagiarize, fabricate, trade, or sell your work. Doing so violates university policy and can seriously impact your career as a student.

Disability:

I will do everything possible to assist those with special needs. Please meet with me in the first week of class to discuss how we can accommodate you. It is also recommended that you work with the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) to ensure that your needs are accommodated appropriately in all of your classes. Their website includes information about the many services they provide: <http://aec.uoregon.edu/>.

---

### Course Outline and Readings

---

Tues., Jan. 6: An Introduction to Folklore and the Supernatural; Course Overview.

---

Thurs., Jan. 8: The Intellectual Origins of Folklore Studies.

READING: Elliott Oring. On the Concepts of Folklore. [BLACKBOARD]

Jack Santino. Popular Culture and Folklore. [PACKET]

---

Tues., Jan. 13: Documenting Supernatural Lore in Context.

READING: William A. Wilson. Documenting Folklore. [PACKET]

OPTIONAL: Martha C. Sims and Martine Stephens. Fieldwork and Ethnography.  
[BLACKBOARD]

---

Thurs., Jan. 15: Supernatural Traditions and Folklore Studies: Concepts and Definitions.

READING: Leonard Norman Primiano. Religion, Folk. [PACKET]

Linda J. Lee and Pauline Greenhill. Superstitions. [PACKET]

George J. Gmelch. Baseball Magic. [PACKET]

---

---

Tues., Jan. 20: Legends and Memorates.

READING: Jan Harold Brunvand. "New Legends for Old" and "The Vanishing Hitchhiker."  
[BLACKBOARD]

Gillian Bennett. "Legend and Memorates" and "Patterns of Belief." [BLACKBOARD]

VIEWING: Wondrous Events [VT 2742]

---

Thurs., Jan. 22: Rites of Passage, Legends and Memorates, II.

READING: Victor and Edith Turner. Religious Celebrations. [PACKET]

Peter A. Metcalf. Death Be Not Strange. [PACKET]

Margaret K. Brady. Transformations of Power: Mormon Women's Visionary Narratives.  
[PACKET]

---

Tues., Jan. 27: Vernacular Religion and Spirit Possession: Vodou.

READING: Joseph M. Murphy. Santeria and Vodou. [PACKET]

VIEWING: *Legacy of the Spirits* [VT 3863]

---

Thurs., Jan. 29: Traditions of Supernatural Assault, I: Zombies and the Living Dead.

READING: Gino Del Guercio. The Secrets of Haiti's Living Dead. [PACKET]

---

Tues., Feb. 3: Traditions of Supernatural Assault, II: Vampires and the Night Terror.

READING: Paul Barber. The Real Vampire. [PACKET]

Bruce Bower. Night of the Crusher. [BLACKBOARD]

OPTIONAL: Shelley Adler. Sudden Unexpected Nocturnal Death Syndrome among Hmong Immigrants: Examining the Role of the Nightmare. [BLACKBOARD]

---

Thurs., Feb. 5: Traditions of Supernatural Assault, III; Ouija Board Rituals & *La Llorona*.

READING: Bill Ellis. Speak to the Devil: Ouija Board Rituals Among American Adolescents.  
[BLACKBOARD]

Pamela Jones. "There Was a Woman": *La Llorona* in Oregon. [PACKET]

---

Tues., Feb. 10: **Midterm Examination.**

---

Thurs., Feb. 12: Spiritualism.

READING: Kristin G. Congdon and Simon J. Bronner. Spiritualists. [PACKET]

---

Tues., Feb. 17: Angels and Otherworldly Beings; Near Death Experiences.

READING: Jenny Randles. Angels. [PACKET]

Leonard Norman Primiano. Angels and Americans. [BLACKBOARD]

Jeffery L. MacDonald and Margaret Willson. The Near-Death Experience. [PACKET]

---

Thurs., Feb. 19: Apocalyptic Beliefs and Millenarian Movements; Aliens and UFO Religions.

READING: Patricia Hickson. The End of the World As We Know It (Again).  
[BLACKBOARD]

Daniel Wojcik. Apocalyptic and Millenarian Aspects of American UFOism. [BLACKBOARD]

---

Tues., Feb. 24: To be announced.

---

Thurs., Feb. 26: Marian Apparitions and Pilgrimage, I.

READING: E. Ann Matter. Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in the Late 20th Century.  
[PACKET]

---

---

Tues., March 3: Pilgrimage, II.

READING: Edith Turner. Pilgrimage. [PACKET]

Michael York. Contemporary Pagan Pilgrimages. [BLACKBOARD]

---

Thurs., March 5: The Stigmata.

READING: Ted Harrison. What a Way to Spend Easter. [PACKET]

---

Tues., March 10: Pilgrimage and Healing; Spontaneous Shrines and Roadside Memorials.

OPTIONAL: Lee Gilmore. 2005. Embers, Dust, and Ashes: Pilgrimage and Healing at the Burning Man Festival. In *Pilgrimage and Healing*, eds. Jill Dubisch and Michael Winkelmann, pp. 155-177. Tucson: University of Arizona Press. [BLACKBOARD]

Daniel Wojcik. 2008. Pre's Rock: Pilgrimage, Ritual, and Runners' Traditions at the Roadside Shrine for Steve Prefontaine. [BLACKBOARD]

Robert Thomas Dobler. 2011. Ghost Bikes: Memorialization and Protest on City Streets. [BLACKBOARD]

---

Thurs., March 12: Fieldwork project presentations and course review.

**NOTE: Fieldwork Project due.**

---

Thursday, March 19: **Final Examination**, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

---