Folklore 255: Folklore and U.S. Popular Culture  
Winter Quarter, 2012; Monday & Wednesday, 12:00-1:20; 248 Gerlinger  
Daniel Wojcik, 463 PLC; 346-3946; dwojcik@uoregon.edu  
Office Hours: Mon., 1:30-3:00 p.m., and Tues., 1:30-3:00 p.m., 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.”

Course Description:

This class introduces students to the theories and methods used in the study of folklore and popular culture. We will examine a diversity of approaches to the description and analysis of "common culture," including topics such as popular narratives, rituals, legends, stereotypes, cultural performances, subcultures, body politics, and the commodification of youth culture. Special focus will be given to the ways that folklore and popular culture reflect and shape dominant ideologies, and how people may use mass cultural products to create new, personal, and sometimes subversive meanings.

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 (30% of grade) and a final examination (30%). Additional requirements include participation in discussion and the completion of one fieldwork project (10%), and a 10 page research paper (30% total) on a topic agreed upon in advance between the student and the instructor and based on a proposal. Details for fulfilling these requirements will be announced in class.
Course Outline and Readings

Mon., Jan. 9: Introduction to the Course.

Wed., Jan. 11: What is Folklore? What is Popular Culture?
READING: Bronner, Simon J. Folklore. [PACKET]
Santino, Jack. Popular Culture and Folklore. [PACKET]
Wilson, William A. Documenting Folklore. [PACKET]

Mon., Jan 16: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: No class.

READING: Fiske, John. The Jeaning of America. [BLACKBOARD]
Brunvand, Jan Harold. New Legends for Old. [PACKET]
OPTIONAL: Oring, Elliott. Folk Narratives. [BLACKBOARD]

READING: Fine, Gary Alan. Mercantile Legends and the World Economy: Dangerous Imports from the Third World. [PACKET]
Turner, Patricia A. Church’s Fried Chicken and the Klan: A Rhetorical Analysis of Rumor in the Black Community. [PACKET]

Wed., Jan. 25: Rituals and Rites of Passage.
READING: Gmelch, George J. Baseball Magic. [PACKET]
Turner, Victor and Edith. Religious Celebrations. [PACKET]

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

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Mon., Jan. 30: Children's Culture, Icons, and Popular Lore.

READING: Mechling, Jay. Children's Folklore. [BLACKBOARD]

Motz, Marilyn. "Seen Through Rose-Tinted Glasses": The Barbie Doll in American Society. [PACKET]

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Wed., Feb. 1: Monsters, the Living Dead, and Supernatural Assault.

READING: Bower, Bruce. Night of the Crusher. [BLACKBOARD]

Barber, Paul. The Real Vampire. [PACKET]


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Mon., Feb. 6: The Living Dead, II; Zombies.

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

**NOTE: RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE.**

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Wed., Feb. 8: Midterm Examination.

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Mon., Feb. 13: Car Cultures and Art Cars.

READING: Evans-Pritchard, Deirdre. Vehicles for Expression: Two Decorated Cars in Los Angeles. [PACKET]

VIEWING: *Wild Wheels*

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READING: Wojcik, Daniel. Approaching Doomsday. [PACKET]

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

Mon., Feb. 20: Subcultures, Fan Cultures, and the Carnivalesque.

READING: Hodkinson, Paul. Four Indicators of (Sub)Cultural Substance. [PACKET]

Jones, Peter. Anarchy in the UK: '70s British Punk as Bakhtinian Carnival. [BLACKBOARD]

Jenkins, Henry. Television Fans, Poachers, Nomads. [BLACKBOARD]


Fiske, John, "Fans and Productivity." In *Understanding Popular Culture*, pp. 146-158. [RESERVE]


READING: Sanders, Clinton R. Memorial Decoration: Women, Tattooing, and the Meanings of Body Alteration. [PACKET]


Mon., Feb. 27: To be announced.


READING: Austin, Joe. Knowing Their Place: Local Knowledge, Social Prestige, and the Writing Formation in New York City. [BLACKBOARD]

VIEWING: *Style Wars*

Mon., March 5: College Folklore, UO Traditions, and Local Culture.


**NOTE: FIELDWORK PROJECT DUE.**

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Wed., March 7: Resistance is Futile: Youth Cultures and the Commodification of Cool.


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Mon., March 12: Youth Cultures and the Commodification of Cool.


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Wed., March 14: Course review.

**NOTE: RESEARCH PAPER DUE.**

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Mon., March 19: Final Examination, 10:15-12:15 a.m.