Folklore 411/511: Folklore and Religion  
Winter Quarter, 2012; Tuesday & Thursday, 12:00-1:20; 102 Deady Hall  
Professor 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 course introduces students to the research questions and theoretical models used by folklorists and other scholars in the study of vernacular religion and popular spirituality. We will examine religion and spirituality as it is "lived," focusing primarily on beliefs and practices that are informally learned and generally unsanctioned by institutional doctrines and authorities. The course is organized to reflect particular topics and areas of research that have preoccupied folklorists and other cultural theorists, and we will explore the issues and perspectives that have informed their studies. The role of folklore in people's religious lives will be explored through the analysis of narratives, rituals, beliefs, ceremonies, customs, celebrations, pilgrimages, and numinous experiences.

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 undergraduate students are required to complete a midterm examination (30% of grade) and a final examination (35%). No make-up exams or incompletes will be given. Additional requirements include participation in discussion and a 10 page research paper (35%) on a topic agreed upon in advance between the student and the instructor and based on a research proposal.

Graduate students are required to complete the in-class midterm (30%) and final exams (30%), which may have an additional take-home question; write a 15-20 page research paper, participate in class discussion, and lead one discussion on an assigned reading (totaling 40%). Details for fulfilling these requirements will be announced in class.
Course Outline and Readings

Tues., Jan. 10: An Introduction to Folklore and Religion; Course Overview


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

Sims, Martha C., and Martine Stephens. Folklore. [Packet]

Wilson, William A. Documenting Folklore. [PACKET]


READING: Geertz, Clifford. Religion as a Cultural System. [ PACKET]

Spiro, Mel fork. Religion: Problems of Definitions and Explanations. [ PACKET]

Yoder, Don. 1974. Toward a Definition of Folk Religion. [J-STOR]


READING: Motz, Marilyn. The Practice of Belief. [J-STOR]

Hufford, David J. The Scholarly Voice and the Personal Voice: Reflexivity in Belief Studies. [J-STOR]

Toelken, Barre. The Yellowman Tapes. [J-STOR]

Lawless, Elaine J. "I was afraid someone like you... an outsider... would misunderstand": Negotiating Interpretive Differences between Ethnographers and Subjects. [J-STOR]


Fuller, Robert. Unchurched Spirituality. [PACKET]

Sir James Frazer. Sympathetic Magic. [PACKET]

Bronislaw Malinowski. The Role of Magic and Religion. [PACKET]


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Thurs., Jan. 26: The Cultural Source Hypothesis and the Experience-Centered Approach in Belief Studies; Legends and Memorates.

READING: Hufford, David J. Beings without Bodies: An Experience-Centered Theory of the Belief in Spirits. [PACKET]

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

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

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Tues., Jan. 31: Legends, Memorates, and Traditions of Supernatural Assault.

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

Figueroedo, Maria. The Legend of La Llorona: Excavating and (Re)Interpreting the Archetype of the Creative/Fertile Feminine Force. [PACKET]

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

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Thurs., Feb. 2: Ritual, Rites of Passage, and Liminal States.

READING: Van Gennep, Arnold. The Rites of Passage. [PACKET]

Turner, Victor. Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage. [PACKET]

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READING: Mary Lee Daugherty. Serpent Handling as Sacrament. [PACKET]

Steven Kane. Ritual Possession in a Southern Appalachian Religious Sect. [PACKET]

Thurs., Feb. 9: Spiritualism and Channelling.

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

Spencer, Wayne. To Absent Friends: Classical Spiritualist Mediumship and New Age Channelling Compared and Contrasted. [PACKET]

NOTE: RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE.


Thurs., Feb. 16: Ritual, Healing, and Gender, I.


Tues., Feb. 21: Ritual, Healing, and Gender, II.


READING: Daniel Wojcik. From The End of the World As We Know It: Faith, Fatalism, and Apocalypse in America, pp. 1-36, 134-148. [PACKET]

Sitler, Robert. The 2012 Phenomenon: New Age Appropriation of an Ancient Mayan Calendar. [J-STOR]

Tues., Feb. 28: Pilgrimage.

READING: Edith Turner. Pilgrimage. [PACKET]
Luigi Tomasi. Homo Viator: From Pilgrimage to Religious Tourism via the Journey. [PACKET]

Michael York. Contemporary Pagan Pilgrimages. [BLACKBOARD]

Thurs., March 1: Pilgrimage and Visions of the Virgin Mary.


Peterson, Jeanette Favrot. The Virgin of Guadalupe: Symbol of Conquest or Liberation? [PACKET]

Zimdars Swartz, Sandra. Visions of Mary, Wounds of Christ: Women Stigmatics in the Apocalyptic Piety of Recent Marian Apparitions. [PACKET]

Tues., March 6: Secular or Religious Pilgrimage?


Michalowski, Raymond, and Jill Dubisch. “Pilgrims for America: The Power of Ritual.” In Run for the Wall: Remembering Vietnam on a Motorcycle Pilgrimage. [PACKET]

Thurs., March 8: Spontaneous Shrines and Roadside Memorials.

READING: Jack Santino. Performative Commemoratives, the Personal, and the Public: Spontaneous Shrines, Emergent Ritual, and the Field of Folklore. [J-STOR]


Dobler, Robert Thomas. Ghost Bikes: Memorialization and Protest on City Streets.

Tues., March 13: The Internet, Religion, and Vernacular Belief.


Dobler, Robert. Ghosts in the Machine: Mourning the MySpace Dead. [PACKET]

Thurs., March 15: Student presentations and course review.

NOTE: RESEARCH PAPER DUE.

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