**American Folklore**

**Description and Syllabus**

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| Instructor | William Hoversen | E-mail | Whoversen@gmail.com |
| Office | Room 439 | Office Hours | Thursday 14:30 - 16:00 |

**Course Description:**

This course aims to discuss the wide variety of folklore found within the United States and surrounding area. The lectures will focus on the cultural roots of American folklore be it assimilated Native American tales that have been woven into the American tapestry or remained separate entirely, transplanted folklore as part of the movement of people to the United States, or uniquely American stories that sought to strengthen the American identity and experience.

**Attendance:** Come to every single class. The university allows you to miss three classes, if you miss four you fail for the entire semester. I take a note of all late students. Three late occasions equal one missed class. It adds up very quickly, so arrange your matters accordingly. It is your responsibility to know how many classes you have missed and how many times you have been late. I will not remind you at every class.

If I see you using your phone in class you will be marked absent. That includes taking notes. Please refrain from checking your email or Facebook/Twitter/Instagram etc during class. If I find you not paying attention during class and looking at other stuff on your chosen piece of technology you will be sent out of the room. If your mind is not on the class there is no reason for you to be there, bothering others who want to pay attention and learn.

**Expectations**: You will attend all scheduled lectures, as any information that is discussed in lectures or presentations is viable for the midterm and final. All assigned reading will be done in advance of the class, as any information found there will also appear on the mid-term and final. Occasionally, pop quizzes will be administered to ensure that you are engaged

**Evaluation:**

- Group Presentation on one aspect of American folklore. This will be discussed in greater detail later in the semester - 20%

- In-class participation - 10%

- Mid-Term Exam – 30%

- End of Term Final Exam - 40%

**Texts:**

Dorson, Richard. *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction*. New edition, University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Hurston, Zora Neale. Mules and Men (P.S.). Reprint, Amistad, 2008.

Botkin, B. *A Treasury of American Folklore: Stories, Ballads, and Traditions of the People*. Globe Pequot, 2016.

**Final Course Grades:**

*All* of the above will need to be completed and not more than three missed classes for the following grades to be assigned.

100% to 91% = 5

90% to 81% = 4

80% to 71% = 3

70% to 60% = 2

**Rules of the class:** No off color language will be tolerated (I can joke, you can joke, but we will not put someone down, we will not make anyone feel uncomfortable). If you are late, do not knock, just come in as unobtrusively as possible and take a seat. Phones are away while you are in here. You have a phone out, you are here in person only and not engaged in the class. Ergo, it’s an absence. I reserve the right to change any or all of the syllabus during the semester.

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| Date | Topic |  |
| Week 1 | Introduction to Folklore: What is Folklore and Folklore Theories |  |
| Week 2 | Part 1: Before the Arrival of Europeans   * Native American Myths: Creation and Tricksters |  |
| Week 3 | * The Monsters of Native American Myths |  |
| Week 4 | Part 2: The Finding and Founding Myths:   * The Apocryphal Narratives of Early Settlement and Independence |  |
| Week 5 | Part 3: Folklore of the Old Country Reimagined:   * European lore in an American Context |  |
| Week 6 | * African Oral Tradition Transplanted |  |
| Week 7 | Midterm |  |
| Week 8 | No Class – Fall Break |  |
| Week 9 | Part 4: America Seeks Its Own Folk Identity   * American Folk Literature |  |
| Week 10 | The Stories of Manifest Destiny   * American Tall Tales * Fearsome Critters and the Beasts that Stood in the Face of Progress |  |
| Week 11 | Part 5: Premodern Folklore   * Myths of Appalachia |  |
| Week 12 | Part 6: Modern Myths   * American Cryptids |  |
| Week 13 | Presentations |  |
| Week 14 | Final Exam |  |