

ENGL 151: First-Year Writing Seminar
Topic: Folklore in a Modern World
Section 3: MWF 10:00 am-10:50 am, Buckman 214
Section 4: MWF 11:00 am-11:50 am, Buckman 214

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"I will tell you something about stories. . . . They aren't just for entertainment. Don't be fooled" (Leslie Marmon Silko, Ceremony).

Welcome to the course! In today's world with its dependence on print and electronic media, it is worthwhile to ask ourselves what roles folklore and oral tradition continue to play in our society and in our lives. What do we mean today by such terms as "folklore" or "folklife"? How can we understand the changing nature of the spoken word in modern cultural contexts? How might oral styles and stories relate to contemporary literature and media? to the rise of online content, or to advertising? In what ways do our own oral traditions inform our responses to fiction, film, or advertising? What ethical and social issues are involved in fieldwork and folklore collection? These and related questions will help guide our reading and discussion across four units, each of which will culminate in a tightly focused paper. The first section of this course will explore uses of folklore in a modern novel; a second unit will examine the integration of folklore—specifically proverbs—into popular culture. In the third unit you will be asked to collect, contextualize, and interpret items of folklore in your own lives. Finally, you will research a specific oral tradition, drawing extensively on print and electronic library resources in the preparation of an annotated bibliography and research paper. To enhance our understanding and awareness of the ongoing vitality of folk traditions within our community, we will take a field trip to the Center for Southern Folklore in downtown Memphis and will also hear a guest speaker who has worked with the Crossroads to Freedom oral history project. Throughout the entire semester, we will analyze various modes of oral and written communication with the primary goal of increasing awareness of the complex factors that guide our many choices as writers.

Course Goals

The course will focus especially on writing and critical thinking. Assignments, readings, and class activities have been designed with a number of specific goals in mind:

- 1) developing skills in written expression;
- 2) learning to *analyze* and *critically evaluate* ideas, arguments, and points of view;
- 3) gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity specifically within the field of folklore studies.

Textbooks and Related Materials:

- *Living Folklore*. By Martha C. Sims and Martine Stephens. Utah State UP, 2005.
- *The Open Handbook: Keys for Writers*. Ann Raimos, with Maria Jerskey. Houghton Mifflin, 2007.
- *Oral History: A Novel*. Lee Smith. Random House.
- *A Celebration of Family Folklore: Tales and Traditions from the Smithsonian Collection*. Steven J. Zeitlin, Amy J. Kotkin, and Holly Cutting Baker. Yellow Moon Press, 1982
- *Guide to Effective Paper Writing* (Rhodes College Writing Center)
- Additional readings (including assigned articles on proverbs by W. Meider) will be distributed as handouts or made available on the Moodle site.
- As you budget for the semester, please be aware that there will also be a small fee associated with our field trip to the Center for Southern Folklore in late October or early November. I will provide details and the exact amount by mid-September.

Course Requirements

- Papers 1-4: 60% (15% each)
 - Specific requirements regarding each paper will be provided at the beginning of each unit. See attached sheet for an overview.
 - One full letter grade will be deducted from papers submitted more than five minutes after the beginning of class but within one week of the due date. Papers submitted more than one week late will not be accepted. Any special arrangements must be made ahead of time and outside of class.
 - Papers should be submitted both in hard copy and as attachments through the Moodle website. Unless we make arrangements ahead of time, please try to avoid sending papers to me as email attachments. (Caveat: While I do prefer Moodle submissions, I would much rather have an email attachment than no paper at all!)
 - Please note that all writing to receive credit must be original work for this particular class. No paper or portion of a paper may receive credit in more than one course without prior authorization.
- Revision (paper of your choice)
 - While drafting and revision will be an integral component of every unit and paper, the final unit of the course will be devoted to revision of the paper of your choice. The grade of the revised version will be averaged with the grade of your original submission. This average will then replace the grade of the original paper. (For example, if your grade on Paper 2 is a 75% and your revised submission earns an 85%, your new grade for Paper 2 will be an 80%.)
 - Please be aware that revision is a crucial skill that we will be developing this semester, and the submission of a thoughtfully revised paper is mandatory. The same late penalties and submission policies apply to the revisions as to the four papers themselves. Failure to submit a revised paper (or the submission of a paper only very lightly and superficially revised) will result in the lowering of one of the original grades.
- Annotated Bibliography and Progress Report: 5%
 - Details for this assignment will be provided later in the semester. Assignments submitted more than five minutes after the beginning of class and within 48 hours of the original due date will be subject to a 10% penalty. Because this assignment is crucial preparation for Paper 4, progress reports and bibliographies submitted more than 48 hours late cannot be accepted. Any special arrangements must be made ahead of time and outside of class.
- Paper Workshops: 10%
 - Prior to the submission of each paper, we will have an in-class writing workshop. These workshops will focus on such skills as peer editing, self-editing, draft-writing, and revision. Be aware that there may be pre-workshop assignments that will count as part of your workshop grade, such as the submission of drafts or partial drafts to group members and/or your Writing Fellow ahead of time. If you miss a class for any reason, please be sure to check the Moodle site for any such assignments or instructions.
- Quizzes and Class Activities: 10%
 - While this course has no cumulative examinations, a series of graded quizzes, exercises, and other class activities will allow you opportunities to demonstrate your knowledge and retention of readings and key concepts.
 - Because of the logistical problems involved in making up quizzes and in-class activities, two scores will be dropped to allow for occasional illness or emergency. Any special arrangements for extenuating circumstances must be made ahead of time and outside of class. Please note that quizzes may or may not be announced ahead of time. If you miss class, be sure to check the website to see if online assessments or other activities have been assigned.
- Weekly Forum Posts: 10%
 - Weekly postings are intended to stimulate in-class discussions, to serve as starting points for formal papers (where appropriate), and to offer additional writing practice throughout the semester.
 - A new discussion topic will be added to the Moodle website each Monday or Tuesday, and all postings will be due by midnight the following Thursday.
 - Posts submitted after this deadline but before the beginning of class Friday will be subject to a 10% deduction. Posts submitted after the beginning of classtime will not receive credit.
 - Postings may begin new threads (related to the assigned topic) or may respond to other students.

- Please note that you must post to the assigned board each week to receive credit. The two lowest scores will be dropped to allow for occasional illness and emergencies. Any special arrangements must be made ahead of time and outside of class.
- Participation: 5%
 - Your participation grade will be determined on the basis of your attendance, the quality of your contributions to discussion, your participation in class activities, and your completion of any ungraded assignments.
 - Participation will also include a mandatory meeting with your Writing Fellow that will be scheduled well in advance for a time convenient to both you and the Writing Fellow. Failure to meet with your Writing Fellow at your scheduled time and/or inadequate preparation for this meeting will result in a reduction of your participation grade.
 - Please note that while the course's success will depend largely on class discussion, there are many ways to participate. Those who speak often will not automatically receive higher grades than more quiet students. If you seldom speak in class, you can participate by making more frequent contributions to online forums or contributing more actively in small groups.
 - In all cases, contributions to discussion (in class and online) should demonstrate careful reading of course materials and must be respectful of other students' ideas and points of view. For information on the attendance policy, see below.

Additional Notes

Class preparation: Please read all materials carefully before you come to class. Bring questions about what is difficult or confusing to you. Also come prepared to share your thoughtful insights and responses. It is your responsibility to notify me *before* classtime of any problems completing readings or assignments. While time spent completing readings and assignments will no doubt vary from student to student and from day to day, you should expect to spend several hours preparing for each hour that you are in class. See helpful tips on time management at <http://www.rhodes.edu/12089.asp>.

honor code: All work must adhere to the honor code: "As a member of the Rhodes community, I pledge I will not lie, cheat, or steal, and that I will report any such violation that I may witness."

plagiarism and academic integrity: The Rhodes College Honor Council Constitution defines plagiarism as follows: "Cheating includes plagiarism; specifically, it is the act of using another person's words or ideas and representing them as one's original work. This includes, without limitation, using information from any source without proper reference, getting ideas or words from a classmate's paper, failure to properly punctuate direct quotes, and obtaining a paper from someone else. Ignorance is not an excuse for these violations. It is the student's responsibility to consult the professor, an Honor Council member, or writing handbooks for procedure for properly acknowledging sources." Barret Library offers the following advice for avoiding possible plagiarism (<http://www.rhodes.edu/barret/15554.asp>):

- Acknowledge and cite all sources properly.
- Use quotation marks around words that are not your own.
- Properly introduce and indent longer quotations that are not your own.
- Use footnotes or endnotes to acknowledge another's words or ideas.
- Do not paraphrase too closely.

Please note also that all writing in English 151 must be original work produced specifically for this course. No paper or portion of a paper—even if revised—may receive credit if it has already received or will receive credit in another class. Please ask me, a Writing Fellow, or Writing Center staff member if you have any doubt about even a small portion of a paper that you have produced.

Attendance: As the official Student Handbook explains, Rhodes College "considers interactive engagement with other students and the professor, in a structured setting, to be one of the essential and central components of the academic program. . . . Absenteeism is not to be taken lightly" (<http://www.rhodes.edu/studenthandbook/2176.asp>). Regular attendance is thus expected and counts as a part of your participation grade. Three tardies will be treated as one absence. In addition to the effect of absences on your participation grade, after three unexcused absences, your

overall grade may automatically be reduced by 2 percentage points each day. For example, if your course average at the end of the semester is an 80% and you have 4 unexcused absences, your course grade will be lowered to 78%. I will take roll or distribute a roll sheet at the beginning of each class. I will have a sign-in sheet for late arrivals at the front of the room. Please note that it is *your* responsibility to sign the sheet if you arrive late in order to avoid recorded absences. Absences and tardies may be excused only if I have been notified ahead of time and outside of class. If you miss class, be sure to check the course website for missed material or assignments. Students whose reasons for absence raise privacy concerns should seek assistance from the Office of Student Affairs: <http://www.rhodes.edu/campuslife/1186.asp>. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to check the course website and/or contact me for any notes or assignments you may have missed.

Computer problems: Please be aware that computer and printing problems will not serve as an excuse for late assignments. Back up your hard-drive files frequently, and always keep a second hard copy of your assignments. If you need to discuss extenuating circumstances, please arrange a time to meet with me or contact me by email. Please avoid using the time immediately before and after class to ask for special arrangements. Information on late penalties can be found under course requirements.

Special Accommodations: If you require any disability-related accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible. I am more than happy to help make any necessary arrangements. If you have not already done so, please contact the Office of Disability Services: 901-843-3885. For further information, go to <http://www.rhodes.edu/disabilityservices/default.asp>.

Library Reserve: Occasionally, books that might be especially helpful for your research may be placed on reserve in Barret Library. For information on using Library Reserves, go to <http://www.rhodes.edu/barret/4446.asp>.

The Writing Center: In addition to assistance offered by me and by your Writing Fellow, the Rhodes College Writing Center, Located in Barret Library 122, is an excellent resource for help at all stages of the writing process. You can call the Writing Center at 901.843.3393. For additional information, go to <http://www.rhodes.edu/4680.asp>.

Writing Fellows: We are very fortunate to have Writing Fellows in Sections 3 and 4. These Writing Fellows have demonstrated superior writing skills in their English courses as well as in other writing-intensive classes. Your Writing Fellow will assist with in-class writing exercises and will also be available by appointment to meet with you outside of class. Once in the semester (during Units 1 through 4), you will meet with your Writing Fellow to discuss a paper draft. This meeting will require having a complete (or in some cases, substantial) draft and conference worksheet ahead of the due date. We will arrange a schedule of these meetings early in the semester to ensure that all students can plan schedules accordingly and that your Writing Fellow has a balanced and manageable schedule.

Additional Resources: Success in this course and others is likely to be enhanced with careful time management, good study habits, and a general sense of well-being. The Counseling Center offers free and confidential counseling to Rhodes students: <http://www.rhodes.edu/counselingcenter.asp>. In addition, helpful links and information on such issues as test anxiety, procrastination, homesickness, study skills, and stress are available at <http://www.rhodes.edu/12077.asp>.

Tentative Schedule

[Note: All readings and assignments must be completed by class time on the dates below. From time to time, additional readings will be assigned from *Open Handbook* Parts 3 and 4 to address specific sentence-level writing concerns and punctuation issues as they arise. Additionally, portions of the Rhodes College "Guide to Effective Paper Writing" will be assigned as needed. If you miss class for any reason, please check the Moodle site or contact me for any changes or additions to the schedule below.]

W 8/26: Introduction to class

UNIT 1: FOLKLORE IN LITERATURE

F 8/28: *Oral History* "Author's Note" and 13-24; *Living Folklore* 144-45 (reflexivity); *Open Handbook* 1a, 1b, 51b

M 8/31: *Oral History* 25-68; *Living Folklore* 102-104; *Open Handbook* 1c, 50c

Drop/add period ends: 9/1

W 9/2: *Oral History* 68-118; *Open Handbook* 1e, 1d; last day to complete online Syllabus Quiz

F 9/4: *Oral History* 119-66; *Open Handbook* 2b

Labor Day: No class 9/7

W 9/9: *Oral History* 167-229; *Open Handbook* 17b "language and culture" box;

F 9/11: *Oral History* 233-end; NCSU library special collection materials on *Oral History*:

<http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/exhibits/smith/career.html> (scroll down to 1983). Important: Do not read these materials until AFTER completing the novel; *Open Handbook* 3a, 3c, 3d

M 9/14: *Living Folklore* Chapter 1; bring list of passages in *Oral History* that you plan to work with for Paper 1; *Open Handbook* 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 4e, 5d intro and sections 1, 4, 9

W 9/16: *Living Folklore* Chapter 2 (*extended drop period ends, pass/fail ends*); *Open Handbook* 5a, 5b, 5c, 5e; 37c, 37d

F 9/18: Paper #1 in-class workshop; *Open Handbook* 7a, 7c; 42a, 42b, 9a-e

M 9/21: ***Paper 1 Due*** at beginning of class; meet in Barret Library 128 (computer classroom).

UNIT 2: FOLKLORE IN POPULAR CULTURE

W 9/23: From *Proverbs Speak Louder Than Words* (W. Mieder): "Introduction"; *Open Handbook* 11a-b; 5d 7 and 10; 6f

F 9/25: "'Wisdom is better than wealth': Proverbs as Expressions of Culture and Folklore"; *Living Folklore* 128-32

M 9/28: Mieder, "Anti-Proverbs and Mass Communication: Interplay of Traditional and Innovative Folklore"; *Open Handbook* 39a, 39e, 2a, 6c

W 9/30: Mieder, "It Pays to Proverbialize: Folk Wisdom in the Modern Mass Media"

F 10/2: *Open Handbook* 38c, 44e35, 7d

M 10/5: Paper #2 in-class workshop

W 10/7: ***Paper 2 Due*** at beginning of class

UNIT 3: FOLKLORE IN OUR OWN LIVES

F 10/9: *Living Folklore* Chapter 7

M 10/12: *Celebration of Family Folklore* Acknowledgements, "Family Folklore: The Creative Expression of a Common Past" (2-9); "Family Stories" 10-29, 62-90, 113-117

W 10/14: *Celebration of Family Folklore* "How to Collect Your Own Family Folklore" and Appendix (260-78); "Stories for Children" (126-45)

F 10/16: "Family Customs" 162-81; *Living Folklore* Chapter 4 94-101; Reread *Open Handbook* 38c on "interviews"

Fall Recess: No class 10/19

W 10/21: *Living Folklore* Chapter 5; transcribe small portion (90 seconds or so) of the performance/interview you will be using for Paper 3

F 10/23: *Celebration of Family Folklore* "She Comes by it Honestly" (222-31) "Getting Butter From the Duck" (Folly, 232-41); "Blessing the Ties that Bind" (250-59); continue transcription and analysis of your performance/interview; *Open Handbook* 5d 3, 6 and 11

M 10/26: *Open Handbook*; 42cQ, 44j61

W 10/28: Paper 3 In-Class Workshop; *Open Handbook* 6a-b; Planning Ahead: bring tentative research topic for Paper 4

F 10/30: ***Paper 3 Due*** (*withdraw period ends*); class meeting in Barret Library 35 (computer lab)

UNIT 4: RESEARCH IN FOLKLORE STUDIES

M 11/2: *Open Handbook* 38a, 38b, 38d, 39a-h, 40a-g, 2b

W 11/4: *Living Folklore* Chapter 3; bring one annotation to class

F 11/6: *Living Folklore* Chapter 4; bring one annotation to class

M 11/9: *Living Folklore* Chapter 6; bring one annotation to class

W 11/11: *Open Handbook* 38e; 5d 2, 5, and 12; Bring remaining annotations to Class; Bring draft of working thesis for Paper 4

F 11/13: ***Annotated Bibliography and Progress Report Due*** *No class meeting today.*

M 11/16: *Open Handbook* 41a-f

W 11/18: Paper 4 In-Class Workshop

F 11/20: *Open Handbook* reading TBA

M 11/23: *Paper 4 due*

Thanksgiving Break: No class 11/23 or 11/24

UNIT 5: REVISING

M 11/30: *Open Handbook* 7e-g; 8a-f

W 12/2: Individual Conferences (mandatory, please be sure to sign up for a time)

F 12/4: Individual Conferences

M 12/7: Revised Paper In-Class Workshop; Readings from *Open Handbook* TBA

W 12/9: ***Revised paper (of your choice) due***

Reading Day: 12/10

About English 151 and the F2 Foundations Requirement

This course fulfills an F2 Foundation Requirement: "Develop excellence in written communication." The following information on the F2 requirement as well as the Writing Seminar and related resources is taken from <http://www.rhodes.edu/9078.asp>:

The ability to express concise and methodical arguments in clear and precise prose is essential to success in most courses at Rhodes and in most of the vocations Rhodes graduates pursue. Students will receive significant training in writing during the first two years through (1) one course foregrounding skills of critical analysis, rhetoric, and argumentation, and (2) two writing intensive courses. These three required courses will provide the initial steps in the student's deliberate development as a writer. Courses within each major will ensure that each student continues to refine writing skills over the course of the four years in college.

[This requirement will be satisfied by one writing seminar (taken in the first year) and two writing intensive courses, one of which will be in Search/Life. All three courses are to be completed by the end of the second year. Writing intensive courses and writing seminars may explore material in any discipline or may be interdisciplinary. However, the writing seminars will have as their central focus writing skills.]

The Writing Seminar

Students should take advantage of the Writing Center especially during their first year, when they are enrolled in the first part of the F2 requirement, the Writing Seminar. Many of the tutors took this course themselves and can reinforce the instruction provided by professors.

All of the Writing Seminars, regardless of who teaches them, have similar goals: to develop the ability to read and think critically, to employ discussion and writing as a means of exploring and refining ideas, and to express those ideas in effective prose. Several papers will be required, at least one of which will involve the inclusion of outside sources. The seminar will emphasize successive stages of the writing process, including prewriting, drafting, and revision, and will provide feedback from classmates and the instructor. Currently, the only courses that fulfill this requirement are ENG151 and ENG155.

What to expect

Because each Writing Seminar is designed and taught by a different member of the English department faculty, each class, including the reading and assignments will be different. For example, some professors teach from a "reader" with contemporary essays and rhetorical strategies, while others may teach the fundamentals of Aristotelian argument. Regardless, the goals of the course are the same.

All of the Writing Seminars, regardless of who teaches them, have similar goals: to develop the ability to read and think critically, to employ discussion and writing as a means of exploring and refining ideas, and to express those ideas in effective prose. Several papers will be required, at least one of which will involve the inclusion of outside sources. The seminar will emphasize successive stages of the writing process, including prewriting, drafting, and revision, and will provide feedback from classmates and the instructor.

Outcome Goals

By the end of the semester, each student enrolled in the Writing Seminar should know how to do the following:

1. Determine important questions about a topic or a text on their own.
2. Analyze a writing task and develop a strategy to fulfill it, considering the rhetorical situation and the audience.
3. Assess fairly the arguments of others and develop a critical/analytical response to a written text.
4. Plan and organize a coherent, well-supported argument with a clear thesis.
5. Support the thesis with unified paragraphs that are clearly related and substantially developed. Develop a polished, rational, evidenced argument.
6. Distinguish between kinds of evidence and select evidence that is relevant, sufficiently detailed, and substantial.
7. Summarize, extrapolate, and synthesize material from a variety of sources, giving adequate and accurate documentation.
8. Demonstrate sensitivity to tone, diction, syntax, and figurative language.
9. Express complex ideas in clear and effective prose that has been carefully edited and proofread.
10. Assess their own drafts (drawing on audience feedback when appropriate) and reconceive, restructure, or significantly modify their own arguments.