2016
Folklore 1101 Introduction to Folklore: Concepts and Fieldwork
Monday, Wednesday 1:00pm-2:15pm
Classroom: CC 262

Dr. Richard MacKinnon
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Office hours: Monday/Wednesday 10:30am-12 noon
Tuesday/Thursday 1:00-2:00 pm
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Some of the research that folklorists do is called “fieldwork” as the research occurs in “the field” so to speak, in the community away from one’s office. Folklorists are encouraged to explore topics that will allow for a field component (ie: watching and describing a performance event, interviewing a knowledgeable person with a digital audio or video recorder, recording an event via photography, etc.). Folklorists also rely heavily on archival materials and libraries; thus, at Cape Breton University it is appropriate to become familiar with both the library and the Beaton Institute Archives.
This course introduces some of the basic concepts and techniques of field research. Assignments will draw on both primary sources (the student’s own fieldwork) and archival and secondary sources. By the end of the course, students should be able to apply these concepts and techniques to any Folklore research project and to write Folklore-based research paper.

Required books:


Unit 1 The Concept of Folklore

Weeks 1 and 2
This section of the course introduces the concept of Folklore Studies. Students will examine some past and current definitions and discuss the ever-increasing boundaries of the field. What is Folklore? What characterizes it? Where does Folklore fit in our lives? What role does Folklore play in the creation of identity? Other important concepts such as context, tradition, and group are also explored in this section. We will also visit the Beaton Institute archives to learn about the kinds of materials within an archives and how to use these.
materials. As well, we will also visit the CBU Library and the Centre for Cape Breton Studies Digitization lab and Music Performance Room.

Required reading:


Oring, Elliot. "On the Concepts of Folklore." Pdf (On moodle site)

Bibliography


**Historical Background**

**Week 3**

The development of Folklore studies, romantic nationalism, Folklore as a symbol of ethnic identity and the emergence of Intangible Cultural Heritage will be explored in this section. When and why did Folklore emerge as a discipline? How has it developed in the Atlantic region? How is it connected to ethnic and regional identity? Why has UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization) chosen to use the term “Intangible Cultural Heritage” instead of the term “Folklore”

Readings:

Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage  

Kit of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage  
Bibliography


Unit 2 Interviewing, Fieldwork and Ethics Review

Weeks 4 and 5
An examination of the many research techniques used by the folklorist in the field and archives. Methodological and ethical issues will be discussed and debated. We will discuss the Cape Breton University Ethics Review process required for all students and faculty. We explore interviewing, audio and video recording techniques and the use of photography, sketching floorplans and archival materials when doing fieldwork.

Readings

American Folklore Society. “Statement of the American Folklore Society on Research with Human Subjects.” Available at http://www.afsnet.org/aboutAFS/humansubjects.cfm

Ives, Chapter 23, “Interviewing.” 25-73

Jackson, 1, *Doing Fieldwork,* “13-19
Jackson, 2, “Planning,” 20-28
Jackson, 3, “Collecting,” 29-51
Jackson 6, “Rapport,” 68-78.
Jackson, 8, “Ordinary Talk,” 103-104.

Bibliography


**Unit 3 The Processing of Oral and Material Traditions**

**Weeks 6 and 7**

The transcribing of materials, the depositing in archives and museums and the many ethical issues surrounding collecting, depositing and digitizing of an individual’s and a community’s materials are discussed in this section.

Ives, Chapter 3, “Processing.” pp. 74-100.
Jackson, 15, “Records” pp.pp. 244-258.
Unit 4. Field Methods in Material Culture Studies
Weeks 8 and 9

The various techniques employed by fieldworkers recording materials aspects of culture are explored in this section. Lectures and discussions will focus on photography as a research method, recording techniques for buildings, recording of artifacts. What can material culture fieldwork tell us that cannot be discovered in other available sources?

Bibliography


Unit 5 Putting it all Together: Writing the Folklore Research paper
Weeks 10 and 11

This section discusses how to put a Folklore research paper together from all the varied materials gathered when doing fieldwork: interviews, photographs, archival materials, field notes, etc.

Unit 6 Student Presentations of Research
Week 12
Assignment 1- Book Review due Mon. October 3, 2016 (20 points)

Assignment 2- Research Paper Proposal due Wed. October 19, 2016 (10 points)

Assignment 3- Presentation of Reading Assignment Mon. Nov. 7, 2016 (10 points)

Assignment 5 - Research Paper, Mon. Nov. 28 , 2016 (40 points)

During the last two classes, Mon, Nov. 28th and Nov. 30, students will present their final papers to the rest of the class.

Exam- during examination period (20 points)

Book Review Assignment #1
Folklore 1101
Due: Monday October 3, 2016
Length 4-5 double-spaced typewritten pages

Please write a review of a Folklore book of your choosing.

The purpose of the review is to assess or evaluate this book. First, describe what the book is about. What is the background of the author? What is the point of view of the author? In your review make special note of how the author conducted research. What research was conducted to complete this book? Did the author conduct interviews? What other research is evident? Did the author use an archives? If so, what kinds of archival sources are used? How was the research gathered? Did the author conduct fieldwork? If so, where and when did the research occur?

In your view, what are the strengths of the book? Do you have any criticisms of the book?

Include appropriate footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography

Evaluation: 20 points
Locate the book very quickly and begin working on the assignment right away.

10 points

Write a proposal outlining what you plan to do for your major research paper. Discuss your chosen topic, what you plan to do and how you are going to proceed. Include a preliminary list of books and articles that will help you understand this topic. Also include a time-line outlining the approximate dates when you will complete various stages of the project.

In addition you should have a draft of your ethics review forms completed at this time if you plan to conduct an interview. The proposal should include a brief discussion of the tradition you would like to document, the identification of a primary informant, a brief thesis statement defining the parameters of your project.
It should also indicate who you are going to interview, why, and how what questions you will start with). A bibliography of no less than three sources should be included. You should consult a standard style guide – (MLA, Chicago Style, etc. – for how to do proper citations.)

Assignment 3

Presentation of Reading Assignment: 10 points due: Mon. Nov. 7, 2016.

Chose an article that focuses on fieldwork, interviewing or ethnography from one of the Folklore journals in our library (Canadian Folklore Canadien, Ethnologies, Journal of American Folklore, etc.). Write a two page summary of the main points of the reading. The student will also orally present the reading assignment on the due date.

Assignment 4: Major Research Paper- due Mon. Nov. 28, 2016 (You should be working on this for most of the term). During the last two classes, Nov. 28 and Nov. 30, 2016, students will orally present their research paper to the rest of the class - 40 points.

I would like each student to choose one aspect of Cape Breton Island's Folklore to research and explore using some of the techniques we have learned in this course. The essay should be 10 – 12 page double-spaced pages. This could be a study of one group or community or one particular tradition. The key to a good research paper is to keep your focus narrow to fully understand the issue you are exploring. You must include footnotes and a bibliography showing the sources you have used when doing research for this paper. Please consult with your professor on your topic choice as early as possible in the term.