

ANTH 21 Course Outline as of Summer 2025**CATALOG INFORMATION**

Dept and Nbr: ANTH 21 Title: AMERICAN FOLKLORE/LIFE

Full Title: American Folklore and Folklife

Last Reviewed: 4/25/2022

Units	Course Hours per Week		Nbr of Weeks		Course Hours Total	
Maximum	3.00	Lecture Scheduled	3.00	17.5	Lecture Scheduled	52.50
Minimum	3.00	Lab Scheduled	0	6	Lab Scheduled	0
		Contact DHR	0		Contact DHR	0
		Contact Total	3.00		Contact Total	52.50
		Non-contact DHR	0		Non-contact DHR	0

Total Out of Class Hours: 105.00

Total Student Learning Hours: 157.50

Title 5 Category: AA Degree Applicable

Grading: Grade or P/NP

Repeatability: 00 - Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

Also Listed As:

Formerly: ANTHRO 21

Catalog Description:

Students in this course will study a range of the forms and functions of American oral traditions and folklife customs. We will analyze myths, legends, proverbs, humor, life cycle events, folk architecture, foodways and other folklore/life traditions in American communities and neighborhood settings. Cultural comparisons will include no less than three of the following groups: African American, Asian American, Chicano/Latino American, European American, Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, and Americans of Middle Eastern Origin.

Prerequisites/Corequisites:**Recommended Preparation:**

Eligibility for ENGL 1A or equivalent

Limits on Enrollment:**Schedule of Classes Information:**

Description: Students in this course will study a range of the forms and functions of American oral traditions and folklife customs. We will analyze myths, legends, proverbs, humor, life cycle events, folk architecture, foodways and other folklore/life traditions in American communities

and neighborhood settings. Cultural comparisons will include no less than three of the following groups: African American, Asian American, Chicano/Latino American, European American, Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, and Americans of Middle Eastern Origin. (Grade or P/NP)

Prerequisites/Corequisites:

Recommended: Eligibility for ENGL 1A or equivalent

Limits on Enrollment:

Transfer Credit: CSU;UC.

Repeatability: Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

ARTICULATION, MAJOR, and CERTIFICATION INFORMATION:

AS Degree:	Area		Effective:	Inactive:
	D	Social and Behavioral Sciences	Fall 1981	
	G	American Cultures/Ethnic Studies		

CSU GE:	Transfer Area		Effective:	Inactive:
	D	Social Science	Fall 2011	
	D1	Anthropology and Archeology		
	D3	Ethnic Studies		
	D	Social Science	Fall 2010	Fall 2011
	D1	Anthropology and Archeology		
	D3	Ethnic Studies		
	D4	Gender Studies		
	D5	Geography		
	D6	History		
	D7	Interdisc Social or Behavioral Science		
	D	Social Science	Fall 1987	Fall 2010
	D1	Anthropology and Archeology		
	D4	Gender Studies		
	D5	Geography		
D6	History			
D7	Interdisc Social or Behavioral Science			

IGETC:	Transfer Area		Effective:	Inactive:
	4	Social and Behavioral Science	Fall 2010	
	4A	Anthropology and Archeology		
	4C	Ethnic Studies		
	4	Social and Behavioral Science	Fall 1981	Fall 2010
	4A	Anthropology and Archeology		

CSU Transfer:	Transferable	Effective:	Fall 1981	Inactive:
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UC Transfer:	Transferable	Effective:	Fall 1981	Inactive:
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CID:

Certificate/Major Applicable:

Major Applicable Course

COURSE CONTENT

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Analyze the oral, material, and customary folklore of diverse American cultures.
2. Apply folklore collection techniques when analyzing folklore materials.
3. Describe and explain the pervasiveness and importance of folklore and folklife in everyday settings and the importance of folklore as a communicative process.

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Describe and explain appropriate terms and concepts used in the study of American folklore and folklife.
2. Explain the origins and functions of folklore and folklife customs.
3. Evaluate the role of folklore in the portrayal and affirmation of ethnicity, identity and gender and in the cultural concept of race.
4. Evaluate the effects of folklore relevant to the portrayal and perpetuation of maladaptive cultural stereotypes including those based upon Social Darwinism, class, racism, ethnic prejudice, xenophobia and gender prejudice.
5. Describe and critique the ways in which folklore communicates and portrays the culture of LGBTQ Americans.
6. Apply knowledge of field collection techniques and analysis to folklore materials in American cultures.
7. Compare and contrast folklore and folklife genres, concepts, and theories in no less than three of the following groups: African American, Asian American, Chicano/Latino American, European American, Indigenous Peoples of the Americas and Americans of Middle Eastern origins.
8. Identify some of the major “active bearers” of folklore in the above groups.
9. Identify and evaluate the role of folklore relevant to culture change, including the history and the effects of rumor and conspiracy “theory.”

Topics and Scope:

Topics covered may include:

- I. The Place of Folklore and Folklife Studies in Anthropology
 - A. History and development of folkloristics
 1. Active bearers
 - B. Theoretical perspectives
 1. 19th century perspectives
 2. Contemporary perspectives
- II. Anthropological Concepts and Terms Important in Folkloristics
 - A. Culture and popular culture
 - B. Communication, rumor and conspiracies
 - C. Folk group, nation, ethnicity, race, gender, xenophobia, etc.
 - D. Genre, version, variants and change over time
 - E. Folk taxonomy
- III. Origins of Folklore and Folklife Customs and Events, Covering Perspectives such as:
 - A. Psychological
 - B. Cultural
 - C. Phenomenological
- IV. Role of Folklore and Folklife Events in at Least Three of the Following: African American, Asian American, Chicano/Latino American, European American, Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, and Americans of Middle Eastern origins
 - A. Family, social, and age groups

- B. Religion
- C. Health and healing
- D. Political, occupational, and economic life
- E. Rituals and festivals
- F. Other

V. Survey of Folklore Genres in at Least Three of the Following: African American, Asian American, Chicano/Latino American, European American, Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, and Americans of Middle Eastern origins, covering themes that may include:

- A. Narratives (legends, folktales, myths, etc.)
- B. Folkspeech and proverbs
- C. Jokes, games, graffiti
- D. "Superstitions," beliefs
- E. Folk songs, ballads, dance and drama
- F. Folk medicine
- G. Other

VI. Field Collection Techniques, Analysis, and Presentations.

- A. Fieldwork rules and ethical duties to:
 - 1. Consultants
 - 2. Collaborators
 - 3. Stakeholders
- B. Collection techniques
 - 1. Interview and observation techniques
 - 2. Written and graphic recording
 - 3. Sound recording
 - 4. Visual recording
 - 5. Material lore collection
- C. Analysis
 - 1. Thesis and argument
 - 2. Supporting data
- D. Presentation
 - 1. Written report forms
 - 2. Visual and oral forms

Assignment:

1. Read in required textbooks (10-25 pages weekly).
2. Two to four exams including a final exam, which must include short answer and essay questions.
3. Students will make a field collection of folklore and submit it as a written essay (1200-1500 words).
4. Additional required assignments, which may include but are not limited to the following:
 - A. In-class presentations of folklore collection project.
 - B. Papers on assigned topics, including book and article response papers and critical analysis essays (1 or more, 800-1250 word).

Methods of Evaluation/Basis of Grade:

Writing: Assessment tools that demonstrate writing skills and/or require students to select, organize and explain ideas in writing.

Field collection essay, and any other required writing assignments	Writing 25 - 40%
Problem Solving: Assessment tools, other than exams, that demonstrate competence in computational or non-computational problem solving skills.	
None	Problem solving 0 - 0%
Skill Demonstrations: All skill-based and physical demonstrations used for assessment purposes including skill performance exams.	
None	Skill Demonstrations 0 - 0%
Exams: All forms of formal testing, other than skill performance exams.	
Exams, final	Exams 40 - 60%
Other: Includes any assessment tools that do not logically fit into the above categories.	
Class participation, presentations	Other Category 10 - 30%

Representative Textbooks and Materials:

Folkloristics: An Introduction. Georges, Robert A.; Jones, Michael Owen. Indiana University Press. 1995 (Classic)

Listen to Me Good: The Life Story of an Alabama Midwife. Charles Smith, Margaret. Ohio State University Press. 1996 (Classic)

Living Folklore: An Introduction to the Study of People and Their Traditions. Edition 2. Sims, Martha C.; Stephens, Martine. Utah State University Press. 2011 (Classic)

The Spirit Catches You & You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures. Fadiman, Anne. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 2012 (Classic)

Web-based Resources or Selections from websites, including:

The American Folklore Society, An Online Source of American Folklore Publications, <https://americanfolkloresociety.org/> 2022

The Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, An Online Archive of American and International Folklife Ethnographic Materials, <https://loc.gov/folklife/> 2022

The Western States Folklore Society, An Online Source of Regional, National, and International Folklore Publications, <https://www.westernfolklore.org/> 2022