

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

**2016-2017 MLCS 299 A1: Folklore and Film  
(Fall Term)**

Instructor: Natalie Kononenko

Office: Arts 441-C

Telephone: 780-492-6810

E-mail: nataliek@ualberta.ca

Personal Website: [www.artsrn.ualberta.ca/folkloreukraine/](http://www.artsrn.ualberta.ca/folkloreukraine/)

Class Time: MWF 12-1250

Place: SAB 336

Office Hours: MW 11-1150

*or by appointment*

Course Website: On e-Class

---

**Course Prerequisite: none**

**Course-based Ethics Approval** in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes       No, not needed, no such projects approved

**Community Service Learning component**

Required     Optional     None

**Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available**

- Exam registry – Students’ Union  
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

**Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)**

Yes       No

**Witchcraft in Folklore and film:** Witchcraft has been the subject of many films. Witchcraft films explore everything from the possible existence of supernatural forces to false accusations aimed at innocent people. They explore possession and peoples’ need to believe in magic. Witchcraft films deal with the phenomenon of “othering.” With the prevalence of “othering” on today’s political landscape, studying witchcraft films is especially timely. This is not a course about fairytale film. Rather, it looks at films intended for adults and used as political and social commentary.

The geographic area of focus is Europe and the Americas because most well-known witchcraft films are made in the United States. This does not preclude students from working with witchcraft films and beliefs in other parts of the world. Please consult with your instructor.

**Course Objectives:** Folklore is so much a part of human thinking that it is difficult to recognize. Precisely for this reason, folk beliefs can be used for social and political manipulation. Because folklore is so central to the way people construct the world, it is imperative to understand what folklore is, how it governs thought, and how it can be used to convey ideas.

Course goals include:

- 1) To acquire the ability to identify folklore and folk belief
- 2) To understand how folklore works – often the same motif or structure can be used to convey multiple meanings
- 3) To learn how to analyze film in terms of folklore; this will require looking at folk motifs and folk structures and how they are used
- 4) To understand intertextuality by comparing films that use folklore, not only to the lore itself, but also to each other; to understand the oral, print, and filmic forms of expression

**Texts:** Barbara Rieti, *Making Witches: Newfoundland Traditions of Spells and Counter-spells*, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008 – available as an electronic resource through the U of Alberta library

Michael D. Bailey, *Magic and Superstition in Europe*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2007.

**Resource texts (recommended, but not required):**

Lynne S. McNeill, *Folklore Rules* Utah State Univ. Press, 2013– available as an electronic resource through the U of Alberta library

Jane Barry and Hasan El-Shamy, eds. *Archetypes and Motifs in Folklore and Literature: A Handbook*. M. E. Sharpe Publishers, 2004 – also available as an electronic resource

Additional recommended texts that you can use for your projects appear at the end of this syllabus.

**Films:** *The Crucible*, *Rosemary's Baby*, *Carrie*, *Exorcist*, *Blair Witch Project*, *The Witches of Eastwick*, *Eyes Wide Shut*, *The Craft*, *The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc*. Other films to be selected based on student interest. One possible approach is to compare to recent films such as *Maleficent* and *Hansel and Gretel: Witch-hunters*.

**Course plan:**

**Sept. 2 and the following week (this will be the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup>; Sept. 5 is Labour Day):**

During these first two weeks we will watch *The Crucible* in class.

**Assignment:** read, Rieti, *Making Witches*. It is available as an electronic resource through the U of Alberta library.

**Week of Sept. 12:** The construction of witchcraft. When do witchcraft beliefs come into play? How are they used.

Discussion of the film and of the reading.

**Assignment:** Small research assignments on the Salem Witch trials and on haggling and witch beliefs in Canada.

**Week of Sept. 19 and the following week:** We break into two groups. To cover the largest number of films possible, one group will watch one film and the other group will watch another, related, film. The University of Alberta library has promised to make the films available through

an online streaming service. One group will come to class on Monday and the other group on Wednesday. During the split meetings, the group that that comes to class will discuss appropriate films and readings. The other group will watch the assigned film. On Fridays the entire class meets together; both groups come to class and compare findings.

For the **week of Sept. 19** the two films will be *Rosemary's Baby* and *The Exorcist*. Both films are classics. Both films present the supernatural as real. In both films, humans manipulate the supernatural (and demonic) or at least try to.

**Assignment:** Small research assignments on the filmmakers of the respective movies and also on issues of bullying. The latter is in preparation for the films that are to be viewed in the following week.

**Week of Sept. 26:** The two films are *Carrie* and *The Craft*. In both films teenage girls who see themselves as outsiders manipulate supernatural forces. Closely related is *Witches of Eastwick* where women who feel themselves to be outsiders act as conduits for a demonic being. *Witches of Eastwick* is, cinematically, a superior film and we may choose to watch that instead of *The Craft*.

**Assignment:** Bailey, *Magic and Superstition in Europe*

**Week of Oct. 3 and the following week:** All students come to class on all 3 days. Through a combination of lectures and discussions, we will cover the history of beliefs in magic presented in Bailey's book. We will also do a round of student presentations.

Monday, Oct. 10 is Thanksgiving and there will be no class on that day. Oct. 12 and 14 will be lecture and student presentation days.

**Week of Oct. 17:** We will need to see where we are in terms of our material. Ideally, I would like to do the 2 groups approach again and watch *Blair Witch Project* and *The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc*. In both of these films people question the existence and/or the nature of the supernatural.

**Assignment:** Small research assignments on the historical figure of Joan of Arc.

**Weeks of Oct. 24 and Oct. 31:** Start contemporary films and/or foreign films. Here we will need to discuss and plan based on student interest. I know Slavic films well and good ones are the old and classic version of *Viy* and the much newer *Night Watch*. In the past, we have watched the Bollywood film *Bhool Bhulaiyaa*. Other choices can be discussed.

For modern films I suggest: *Maleficent*, *Hansel and Gretel: Witch-hunters*, and *Deadpool*.

**Nov. 7-11:** Fall Break and Remembrance Day

**Starting Nov. 14 and going through Nov. 25: Project discussions**

You should return from break with a project proposal. This should be a film or a set of films that you will analyze for your final project. On the first day back we will run through your project proposals. Then you will divide into teams to do your project work. Individual work is also an option. The work will involve research related to the film or films of your choice and possibly viewing and analyzing additional films. Literature searches can be done as a team.

**Nov. 28 through Dec. 7 –student presentations.** Oral presentations using a PPT or Prezi. Using the feedback from the presentation, students will rewrite their work and submit the final paper on Dec. 16.

**Grade distribution. From each of you I will want:**

- 1) Film review. A plot summary plus an evaluation. The evaluation analyzes how successful the producer or producers of a film were at meeting their objectives. More details on eClass. This will be 3-5 pages long and worth 10% of the grade. Tentative due date: Sept. 23.
- 2) Film comparison. Here you will take a set of at least 3 films which treat the same topic in different ways and compare and evaluate. The purpose of this exercise is to examine views on a topic and the artistic means conveying those views. This will be 3-5 pages long and worth 10% of the grade. Tentative due date: Oct. 14
- 3) Active participation in discussions – 30% of the grade; some of these will be followed by short, 1 page papers.
- 4) Project proposal – worth 10% and due on Nov. 14. The written portion of the proposal can be as short as ½ page. A tentative bibliography and filmography should be included.
- 5) Formal presentation of your research. This will be analogous to a paper presentation that one would give at a professional meeting. It should be no more than 10 minutes long – 15% of the grade
- 6) Formal research paper, approximately 10 pages, double-spaced, plus bibliography and filmography. This will be your major course project and it will be worth 25% of your grade. Firm due date: Dec. 16

*While there are no exams in this course, the due date of the paper is based on the University examination schedule. The Fall / Winter Exam Planner for the 2016-2017 academic year can be found at the following site:*

<http://www.registraroffice.ualberta.ca/en/Examinations/Fall-2016-Winter-2017-Exam-Planner.aspx>

**Required Notes:**

“Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University calendar.”

**Academic Integrity:**

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx>) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

**Learning and Working Environment:**

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy has been or is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or

- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

### ***Academic Honesty:***

**All students** should consult the information provided by the [Office of Judicial Affairs](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the [Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook](#) and [Information for Students](#)). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

**Students involved in language courses and translation courses** should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.” **Students in language courses** should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

### ***Recording of Lectures:***

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the content author(s) or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

### ***Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:***

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result. **In this course**, MLCS 299 students are expected to participate in discussions. Students should have their reading done ahead of time and be prepared to participate actively to help them master and retain the material. Questions and discussion during lecture are welcome.

### ***Policy for Late Assignments:***

Students who consult in advance with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension. Otherwise, a 33%-per-class-day penalty (one third of a grade, e.g. from B+ to B) will be assessed for each subsequent class-day of lateness.

### ***Student Accessibility Services:***

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not

already registered with [Student Accessibility Services](#), contact their office immediately (1-80 SUB; Email [sasrec@ualberta.ca](mailto:sasrec@ualberta.ca); Email; phone 780-492-3381; WEB [www.ssds.ualberta.ca](http://www.ssds.ualberta.ca) ).

**Grading:** Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

**“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”**

| Descriptor  | Letter Grade | Grade Point Value | %             |
|---|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>Excellent.</b> A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students. | <b>A+</b>    | 4.0               | <b>97-100</b> |
|   | <b>A</b>     | 4.0               | <b>93-96</b>  |
|   | <b>A-</b>    | 3.7               | <b>90-92</b>  |
| <b>Good.</b> B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.  | <b>B+</b>    | 3.3               | <b>87-89</b>  |
|   | <b>B</b>     | 3.0               | <b>83-86</b>  |
|   | <b>B-</b>    | 2.7               | <b>80-82</b>  |
| <b>Satisfactory.</b> C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.  | <b>C+</b>    | 2.3               | <b>77-79</b>  |
|   | <b>C</b>     | 2.0               | <b>73-76</b>  |
|   | <b>C-</b>    | 1.7               | <b>70-72</b>  |
| <b>Poor/Minimal Pass.</b> D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.   | <b>D+</b>    | 1.3               | <b>65-69</b>  |
|   | <b>D</b>     | 1.0               | <b>60-64</b>  |
| <b>Failure.</b>   | <b>F</b>     | 0.0               | <b>0-59</b>   |

Additional recommended readings:

Briggs, Robin, *Witches and neighbours: the Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft*  
 Frankfurter, David, *Evil Incarnate: Rumors of Demonic Conspiracy and Satanic Abuse in History*

Hufford, David J. *The Terror that Comes in the Night: An Experience-centered Study of Supernatural Assault Traditions.*

Johns, Andreas, *Baba Yaga, The Ambiguous Mother and Witch of Russian Folktale*

Kivelson, Valeria, *Desperate Magic: The Moral Economy of Witchcraft in 17<sup>th</sup> century Russia*

Linquist, Galina, *Conjuring Hope: Healing and Magic in Contemporary Russia*

Macfarlane, Alan, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*

Ryan, W. F., *Bathhouse at Midnight: Magic in Russia*

Worobec, Christine, *Possessed: Women, Witches and Demons in Imperial Russia*