

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

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

**2017-2018 MLCS 299 A1: Folklore and Film
(Fall Term)**

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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.

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 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; identifying and understanding folk motifs, folk narrative patterns, 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

Learning Outcomes:

- 1) Students will be able to analyze film narrative. They will be able to effectively articulate the plot and sub-plots of a film.
- 2) Students will be able to state how fear of witchcraft and accusations of witchcraft can be used to manipulate others.
- 3) Students will be able to identify situations in which accusations of witchcraft are likely to occur.
- 4) Students will be able to write a scholarly paper effectively describing one aspect of witchcraft belief as it is articulated in film.

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. See eClass.

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.

Films: *The Crucible*, *Carrie*, *Rosemary's Baby*, *Exorcist*, *The Witches of Eastwick*, *Blair Witch Project*, *Maleficent*.

One or more Foreign films: *What We Do in the Shadows*, *Bhool Bhulaiyaa*, *Mr. Vampire*, *The White-haired Witch*, *The Juniper Tree*.

More Hollywood (optional): *Eyes Wide Shut*, *The Craft*, *Hansel and Gretel: Witch-hunters* (other films, suggested by students, will be considered).

Course plan:

Most weeks will have a background lecture by the instructor, followed by student discussion of topics related to the assigned reading and/or the film. Topics will be distributed in advance of the discussion. There will be a short, 100 word, response paper, due most Mondays, based on the previous week's work.

All students will watch *The Crucible* in class. For subsequent films, students will be divided into groups. Each group will be assigned a film that is to be watched outside of class. All assigned films will be available in the basement of the Arts Building, Room 109 B.

Sept. 6: Introduction. What is folklore and what are the types of folklore. What is a witch? What is witchcraft? Use of folklore in live-action film.

Assignment: start reading Barbara Rieti, *Making Witches: Newfoundland Traditions of Spells and Counter-spells*.

Week of Sept. 11: *The Crucible* – shown in class.

Reading: Barbara Rieti, *Making Witches: Newfoundland Traditions of Spells and Counter-spells*.

Week of Sept. 18: Discussion of *The Crucible*. Discussion of Barbara Rieti's *Making Witches*.

Film viewing: Group 1 – *Carrie*; Group 2 – *The Exorcist*.

Week of Sept. 25: *Making Witches* continued. Witchcraft accusations in the past. Modern equivalents.

Film viewing: Group 1- *Rosemary's Baby*; Group 2 – *Witches of Eastwick*.

Week of Oct. 2: Witchcraft and power. Questions of gender. Film review due.

Reading: Michael D. Bailey, *Magic and Superstition in Europe*.

Week of Oct. 9: The Monday is Thanksgiving – no class. Wednesday and Friday – start the history of witchcraft; change in belief over time.

Reading: Michael D. Bailey, *Magic and Superstition in Europe*.

Week of Oct. 16: Contemporary witchcraft films. The witch's backstory. Updating the witch.

Film viewing: Group 1 – *Maleficent*; Group 2 – *Blair Witch Project*.

Week of Oct. 23: Cultural differences in views on witchcraft and the supernatural.

Film viewing: two foreign films to be selected.

Week of Oct. 30: recap of change in belief over time and of differences in belief across cultures.

No new readings or films. Film comparison due.

Week of Nov. 6: Selecting a film or set of films for the final project.

Nov. 13-17: Remembrance Day and Fall Break.

Week of Nov. 20

Documentary films of what might be considered contemporary witchcraft.

Assignment: project proposal, due Nov. 20.

Peer evaluation of projects, Nov. 24

Nov. 27 through Dec. 8 –student presentations. Oral presentations using a PPT – no Prezi's please. Unless something has changed, Prezi's do NOT upload to eClass.

Write-ups of research – **due Dec. 20.** The write-up should be a formal 5-10 page paper. Detailed instructions will be on eClass. Submit in ARTS 441-C, between noon and 3PM.

Grade Distribution and important due dates:

- 1) Short 100 word response exercises covering the basic concepts of the course – 10%. There will be approximately one such exercise per week; no response exercise when other work is due.
- 2) Attendance and participation – 20%. Attendance will be taken on a random basis. In other words, the dates on which attendance will be taken will not be announced. Participation: students are expected to work with their peers on the discussion questions assigned. All students must participate in the presentation of discussion topics.
- 3) Two papers: A film review due the week of Oct. 2 – 10%.
Film comparison due the week of Oct. 30 – 10%.
The film review and the film comparison are short papers, 2-3 pages each.
- 4) Course project : 50%, divided as follows:
Project proposal, due Nov. 20 – 10%.
Peer evaluation of projects, Nov. 24. – 10%.
Project oral presentation (last 2 weeks of class) – 10%.
Project write-up, due Dec. 20 – 20%.

While there are no exams in this course, the due date of the final paper is based on the University examination schedule. The Fall / Winter Exam Planner for the 2017-2018 academic year can be found at the following site:

<https://www.registrarsoffice.ualberta.ca/en/Examinations/Fall-2017-Winter-2018-Exam-Planner.aspx>

Required Notes:

“Policy about course outlines can be found in [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 www.governance.ualberta.ca) 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 Ombudsman](#). 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, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course 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 or film viewing 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; Email; phone 780-492-3381; WEB www.ssd.s.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	%
Excellent. 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.	A+	4.0	97-100
	A	4.0	93-96
	A-	3.7	90-92
Good. 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+	3.3	87-89
	B	3.0	83-86
	B-	2.7	80-82
Satisfactory. 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.	C+	2.3	77-79
	C	2.0	73-76
	C-	1.7	70-72
Poor/Minimal Pass. 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.	D+	1.3	65-69
	D	1.0	60-64
Failure.	F	0.0	0-59