

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**
<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

2015-2016 MLCS 299 B3 *Folklore and Animation*
(Winter Term)

Instructor: Natalie Kononenko

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Time: MWF 14-14:50

Place: BUS 1-06

Office Hours: MWF 11-11:45

or by appointment

Course Website: on eClass

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

Course Description and Objectives: Folklore and animation go together because animation is so well-suited to rendering the fantasy element of folklore. This course will explore the use of folk narrative, oral, written, and filmic, as a tool for child socialization. While folktales were not originally told to children alone, in the recent past they have been used to grow children into socially desirable adults. Disney Studios have made a fortune producing folkloric narratives that adults consider appropriate fare for their young. The Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin also loved Disney cartoons and ordered Soiuzmultfilm to produce similar films to raise children to become good Soviet citizens. In the recent past studios such as Dreamworks and Melnitsa have satirized earlier approaches to folkloric film and countries with smaller studios have produced important animated works. Japan has emerged as a major player in the folklore film market.

The **main objectives** of the course are:

- 1) to understand the differences between folk narrative as presented orally, in written form, and on film
- 2) to explore how narrative can affect world view and shape the social growth of the child by contrasting folklore-based animation in at least two cultures.

Learning outcomes: by the end of the course students should be able to:

- 1) understand the differences between tale types. Folktales are typically classed as animal tales, magic tales, and tales of everyday life. Students should be able to place any given tale into the correct category
- 2) know at least two approaches to understanding child development and child socialization, be able to name at least one author connected with each approach, and summarize each author's theories
- 3) name at least two writers who have discussed folklore-based animated film and its messages to children; summarize each author's theory of filmic folklore
- 4) improve speaking and writing skills through oral presentations and written assignments

Texts: Required:

Kinderculture: The Corporate Construction of Childhood, ed. by Shirley R. Steinberg, Westview Press 2011 (available as an electronic resource).

Plus a choice of:

Jack Haney, *An Anthology of Russian Folktales*, M. E. Sharpe publishers, 2009 (most of these are available as html files online).

OR – *Folk and Fairytales*, ed. by Martin Hallett & Barbara Karasek, Broadview Press, 2011

OR – *The Fairytales of the Brothers Grimm*, ed. by Edgar Taylor, Floating Press, 2009 (Grimms' tales are also available electronically on a site created by D. L. Ashliman, see <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/folktexts.html>)

A student may chose a body of tales from another tradition in consultation with the instructor.

Students will also be required to read and present a chapter selected from one of the following:

Elizabeth Bell et al. *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*. Indiana Univ. Press, 1995.

Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairytales*, Vintage Books, 1976.

Trevor Blank and Robert Glenn Howard, eds. *Tradition in the 21st Century: Locating the Role of the Past in the Present*, Utah State Univ. Press, 2013.

Noel Brown and Bruce Babington, eds, *Family Films in Global Cinema*, I.B. Tauris, 2015

Henry Giroux, *Breaking into the Movies: Film and the Culture of Politics*, Blackwell Publishers, 2002.

Henry Giroux, *The Mouse that Roared: Disney and the end of Innocence*, Rowan and Littlefield, 2010.

- Christine A. Jones and Jennifer Schacker, eds. *Marvelous Transformations: An Anthology of Fairy Tales and Contemporary Critical Perspectives*. Broadview Press, 2013.
- Natalie Kononenko, *Slavic Folklore*, Greenwood Publishers, 2007.
- David MacFadyen, *Yellow Crocodiles and Blue Oranges: Russian Animated Film since World War II*. McGill Queens Univ. press, 2005.
- Laura Pontieri, *Soviet Animation and the Thaw of the 1960s*. John Libby Publishing, 2012.
- Sharon R. Sherman and Mikel J. Koven, eds. *Folklore/Cinema*, Utah State Univ. Press, 2007.
- Jack Zipes, *The Enchanted Screen, The Unknown History of Fairytale Films*. Routledge, 2011.
- Jack Zipes, *Happily Ever After, Fairytales, Children and the Culture Industry*, Routledge, 1977.

Resource Texts (not required, but very useful):

- Jane Barry and Hasan El-Shamy, eds. *Archetypes and Motifs in Folklore and Literature: A Handbook*. M. E. Sharpe Publishers – available as an electronic resource
- Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, Texas Univ. Press (it will be available at the library and, hopefully, electronically as well.)
- Lynne S. McNeill, *Folklore Rules*. Utah State University Press, 2013.
- Additional materials (both links and articles from journals) will be provided on eClass.

Course Schedule – what follows is the planned sequence of topics:

- 1) The differences between writing and collecting. The differences between folktales and fairytales. Nationalism and folklore.
- 2) The concept of survivals. Tales for children; tales for adults. Romanticism and folklore. The “natural man” and the child.
- 3) Socialization of the child. Didactic nature of tales. The impact of print. Authorship and authority.
- 4) Early animated folk/fairy tales. Disney’s *Snow White*. Ivanov-Vano’s *Hunchback Horse*. Other early Disney and the Soviet classic folktale series on Soiuzmultfilm.
- 5) Theories of child development and their reflection in magic tales. Cartoons based on magic tales. Treatment of classic tales in Western cinema and in the Soviet realm.
- 6) Magic tales and tale-based cartoons, looking at directors with alternative, non-Freudian approaches to child development
- 7) Anecdotal or everyday life tales and their filmic versions. Russian animation of the Thaw. US animated TV series of family drama (Simpsons, Family Guy, old series such as Flintstones)
- 8) Animal tales and the Trickster. Nu Pogodi in the East; Bugs Bunny, Wiley Coyote and the early animated animal tales. Human tricksters – the Kak Kazaki series. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles – animal tale or magic tale? Trickster figures in modern animation.
- 9) The modern turn and satire of classic plots. Dreamworks and Shrek. The Melnitsa series, Studio Paradiz. Southpark. Ren and Stimpy.

10) The innocent appearance of tale-based cartoons. The hidden messages of cartoons. Disney Studios' attempts at political correctness. Attacking Soviet messages in modern cinema? Nationalism again re-asserting independence.

Last week of March and April all students make formal presentations of their work to the class. **Course paper due April 18**

Student work:

- 1) Students will be expected to present the chapter or article which they read orally in front of the class and also to write a synopsis of their reading.
- 2) They will be expected to select and present at least one animated film or set of cartoons in a similar manner – oral presentation followed by a written synopsis.
- 3) As the topics listed above are presented and cartoons and animated films are viewed, students will be divided into groups and each group given a discussion topic based on films or readings. Each group will present the results of the discussion in an informal manner to the class. Such discussion will happen at least once a week.
- 4) Toward the end of the course, students will select a larger topic such as gender in Disney films or the presentation of national minorities in Soviet and post-Soviet cartoons. They will research that topic and use it as the basis for their course project. The course project will be presented in a formal paper which will be delivered both orally in front of the class and in writing.

Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):

Oral presentation of reading – 10%

Oral presentations of readings will begin on Jan. 15 and continue at the rate of 2 per class meeting

Written presentation of reading – 10%

Written synopsis of reading due one week after corresponding oral presentation

Oral presentation of film or cartoon set – 10%

Oral presentations of film or cartoon set begin Feb. 8 (Feb. 15-19 – university closed)

Written presentation of film or cartoon set – 10%

Written report on film or cartoon set due one week after corresponding presentation

Final project – oral presentation (a 10-15 min. long formal presentation) – 10%

Presentations begin on March 28 and end on April 8

Final project – course paper (10-15 pages, including bibliography and filmography, double-spaced; due April 18) – 20%

Participation in in-class discussions of films and readings – 30%

There are no exams in this class, but the due date of the final paper is determined by the exam schedule. See:

<http://www.registraroffice.ualberta.ca/en/Examinations/Fall-2015-Winter-2016-Exam-Planner.aspx>

Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable): not applicable

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Please see the schedule under Grade Distribution and also the description under Student Work

Required Notes:

“Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) 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 which 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 safe and free of discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels 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 directs 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 student ombudservice (<http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/>).

Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures is described in UAPPOL at

<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/DispPol.aspx?PID=110> .

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 languages 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 instructor 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 23.3(1) and 23.5.6 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 participation is worth a BIG part of the course. We will be discussing issues which have no right or wrong answer such as the presentation of gender in cartoons and what such presentation teaches the child. A great deal of the criticism of Disney has been aimed at the Studio’s apparent intent to encourage consumerism. Again – a topic for discussion rather than one with a specific answer. Soviet cartoons were intended to produce the good Soviet adult. How this was done and to what extent it was effective and comparable to work in the West is a topic for discussion. The treatment of “nationalities” is similarly a topic for discussion rather than a question with an answer.

Determining participation grades: Your instructor will not take attendance, but will take notes at each discussion session. Those notes will include a record of student participation, along with student names, and will be used to determine the participation grades. Updates on participation grades will be provided at the end of each unit or approximately every 2 weeks.

Policy for Late Assignments:

All work must be submitted in a timely fashion. Adjustments can be made if the instructor is notified at least 24 hours in advance of the time when work is due. Otherwise, students will have their grade lowered by 1/3 for every day that an assignment is late. In other words, what would have been A work will be graded as A- if it is one day late, B+ if it is 2 days late, and so forth.

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 Specialized Support & Disability Services, contact their office immediately (2-800 SUB; Email sasrec@ualberta.ca; Email; phone 780-492-3381; WEB www.ssds.ualberta.ca).

Grading:

Marks for assignments, tests, and exams are given in percentages, to which letter grades are also assigned, according to the table below (“**MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale**”). The percentage mark resulting from the entire term work and examination then produces the final letter grade for the course.

“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”

Letter	%	Pts	Descriptor
A+	95-100%	4.0	Excellent: Superior performance showing understanding and knowledge of subject matter far exceeding expectations.
A	90-94%	4.0	Excellent: Superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.
A-	86-89%	3.7	Excellent: Clearly above average performance with complete knowledge of subject matter.
B+	82-85%	3.3	Good
B	75-81%	3.0	Good: average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.
B-	70-74%	2.7	Good
C+	66-69%	2.3	Satisfactory: Basic understanding of the subject matter
C	61-65%	2.0	Satisfactory
C-	58-60%	1.7	Satisfactory
D+	55-57%	1.3	Poor: Marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.
D	50-54%	1.0	Minimal Pass: Marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.
F	0-49%	0.0	Failure: Unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements