DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO AT RIO PIEDRAS

COURSE PROPOSAL

FOLK ----: INTRODUCTION TO FOLKLORE,
Prof S. Roldan, Ph.D.
Class hours: -----.

ABSTRACT OF COURSE:

This course is a brief survey of folklore theory and methods. It is not chronological in perspective, but theoretical and practical emphasizing the key concepts and highlights of the discipline. It examines schools and movement, and explores various current trends and viewpoints. A strong emphasis in fieldwork will be made with actual mini-projects as class assignments. Bibliographical scholarship will also be addressed.

Key concepts such as: *folk*, *text*, *context*, *tradition*, and *folk genres* will be discussed vigorously. A strong emphasis will be on the current theories and trends of folklore scholarship, especially as they apply to situational context, and folklore performance theory. The student will be introduced to the four major areas in folklore research: 1) material culture, 2) custom, beliefs, and folk ideas, 3) oral/verbal expressive folklore, and 4) folk performance and ceremony. A focus will be given to oral/verbal folklore and its relationship to literature and literary studies.

Since folklore as a discipline is highly interdisciplinary because it uses theory and methodology from literary analysis, linguistics, anthropology/ethnography and history, the course will provide an ample opportunity for students from various fields to share their ideas and particular research strategies. Interdisciplinary approaches will be fostered. Particular attention will be given to aspects of literature and folklore studies with an emphasis on Anglo-Caribbean language and literature.

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the semester, students are expected to have obtained basic knowledge in the following areas:

- Overview of historical-theoretical development of the discipline
- Knowledge of conceptual framework of folklore's four major areas
- Basic skills in folklore fieldwork, techniques and methodologies
- Knowledge of current trends and views, including recent performance theories

- Application of folklore theory and methodology in the area of Caribbean literature

- Knowledge of oral/verbal folklore and its various facets, including the various kinds of folk narratives, tales, fairy tales, and personal experience narratives.

EVALUATION:

The work of students will be evaluated by both written and oral presentations, including class assignments in actual fieldwork. The final exam will be a special fieldwork project due on _____.

……..

FOLKLORE COURSE OUTLINE

- HISTORY AND THEORY OF FOLKLORE
  * Historical antecedents
  * Schools of thought and movements
  * Key folklorists and their works

- NATURE AND SCOPE OF FOLKLORE
  * Definition of Folklore (as discipline and content)
  * Central problems of discipline
  * Areas of studies: 4 core areas; definitions
  * Anthropology, Literature, History: Folklore Concepts

- BASIC PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS
  * Folk groups as frames of reference
  * Lore as texts and contexts
  * Folk genres and forms
  * Folklore and anthropology
  * Folklore and history
  * Folklore and literature

- METHODOLOGY AND TECHNIQUES
  * Historical methods: primary sources, etc.
  * Ethnographic methods: participant observation, etc.
  * Literary methods: narrative structures, etc.
  * All three methodologies feed into folklore research
- CURRENT FOLKLORE VIEWS
  * Ethnolinguistic approaches

* Cultural-historical perspectives
* Structuralism and folklore
* Idealogy and politics

- AREA OF FOLKLORE STUDIES

  * Oral literature and expressions
    - Fairy tales
    - Folk tales
    - Legends
    - Personal experience narratives; experience stories
    - Shorter oral forms (proverbs, riddles, folk speech, jokes, place naming, folk sayings, jargons, contact formulas, oral-formulaic, etc.)

  * Material culture studies
    - Folk crafts (subsistence and household)
    - Folk arts (sculpture, painting, musical instruments, etc.)
    - Folk architecture
    - Folk medicine
    - Folk cookery

  * Customs, beliefs and folk ideology
    - Folk beliefs (supernatural and non supernatural, etc.
    - Customs (rites of passage, etc.)
    - Gestures, hand signals, folk semiotics
    - Folk ideology and folk view
    - Prosemics and folk space

  * Folk performances and festivals
    - Folk drama and festivals
    - Folk dances and songs, performances, etc.
    - Folk ceremonies, folk preaching, etc.

SPECIFIC CLASS SYLLABUS

Section I – HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUNDS

Brunvand, Jan Harold, "Introduction" IN The Study of American Folklore, pp 1-18.

Dorson, Richard M., "Introduction: Concepts of folklore and folklife studies" IN Folklore and Folklife, pp 1-50.

Foster, George. "What is Folk Culture?" AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST 55(1953): 159-173.

Redfield, Robert. "The Folk Society". AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY. 52(1947): 293-308.

Richmond, W. Edson, "Introduction" IN Handbook of American Folklore, pp xl-xix.

Section II – BASIC PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS

Ben-Amos, Dan. "The seven strands of tradition". JOURNAL OF FOLKLORE RESEARCH. 21(1984): 97-131.

Dorson, Richard M., "A historical theory for American folklore", IN Handbook of American Folklore, pp 326-337.

"Folklore" [definitions] IN Leach, Maria, ed., FUNK AND WAGNALL'S STANDARD DICTIONARY OF FOLKLORE. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1974. 2v.

Section III – FOLK GROUPS AS FRAMES OF REFERENCE

Bauman, Richard, "Differential Identity and the Social base of folklore", IN Towards New Perspectives in Folklore,pp 31-41.

Dorson, Richard M., "Is there a folk in the city?", IN The Urban Experience and Folk Tradition, pp 185-225.

Dundes, Alan, "Who are the folk?" IN Interpreting Folklore, pp 1-19.

Section IV – LORE AS TEXTS AND CONTEXTS

Brunvand, Jan Harold. THE STUDY OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE. New York: Norton Press, 1969, chapters: 4, 8, 9, 11.

Dundes, Alan, "Texture, text, and context", IN Interpreting Folklore, pp 20-32.
Wilgus, D.K., "The text is the thing", IN Journal of American Folklore, 86(1973): 241-252.

Section V – FOLK GENRES AND FORMS

Abrahams, Roger D. "The Complex Relations of Simple Forms." Genre 2 (1969): 104-28

Ben-Amos, Dan, "Introduction", IN Folklore Genres, p.ix-xlv.

Dorson, Richard M. ed., Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972.; chapters, 1-6, 7, 9-10, 11-13, 15

Section VI – FUNCTION OF FOLKLORE

Bascom, William. "Four functions of folklore" Journal of American Folklore 67(1954): 333-349.

Ben-Amos, Dan, "Toward a definition of folklore in context", IN Bauman and Paredes, eds., Toward New Perspectives in Folklore, pp 3-15.

Section VII - STRUCTURALISM AND FOLKLORE

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. "A parable in context" IN Ben-Amos, Dan, FOLKLORE: PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNICATION, The Hague: Mouton, 1975.

Stoeltje, Beverly J. "The Rodeo clown and the semiotics of metaphor". Journal of Folklore Research. 22(1985): 155-77.

Section VIII - IDEALOGY AND POLITICS

Green, Archie, "Interpreting folklore ideologically", IN HANDBOOK OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE, Dorson, ed., pp.351-358.

Kamenetsky, Christa. "Folklore as a political tool in Nazi Germany". Journal of American Folklore 85(1972): 221-35.

Section IX – CURRENT FOLKLORE VIEWS

Abrahams, Roger D. The Man-of-Words in the West Indies: Performance and the Emergence of Creole Culture. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1983

Bauman, Richard and J.Sherzer. EXPLORATIONS IN THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF SPEAKING. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974.

_____. Verbal Art as Performance. Prospect Heights, IL.: Waveland Press, 1977.

Section X – FOLKLORE AND HISTORY: THEORY AND METHOD

Clark, Thomas D. "The Westward Movement" IN HANDBOOK OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE, Dorson, Richard, ed., Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982, pp.32-38.

Dorson, Richard. "Local history and folklore" IN AMERICAN FOLKLORE AND THE HISTORIAN, pp. 145-156.

Dorson, Richard. "Folklore research opportunities in American cultural history" IN AMERICAN FOLKLORE AND THE HISTORIAN, pp. 108-128.

Goldstein, Kenneth S. A GUIDE FOR FIELDWORKERS IN FOLKLORE. chapters: VIII.

Levin, Lawrence W. "How to interpret American folklore historically". IN HANDBOOK OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE, Dorson,Richard, ed., Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982, pp.60-66.

Washburn, Wilcomb E. "The Noble and Ignoble Savage" IN HANDBOOK OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE, Dorson, Richard, ed., Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982, pp.60-66.

Section XI – FOLKLORE AND ANTHROPOLOGY: THEORY AND METHOD

Abrahams, Roger D. "Interpreting folklore ethnographically and sociologically", IN HANDBOOK OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE, Dorson, ed., pp.345-350.

Brunvand, Jan Harold. THE STUDY OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE. New York: Norton Press, 1969, chapters: 12-19.

Dundes, Alan. "Projection in Folklore: A Plea for Psychoanalytic Semiotics" IN INTERPRETING FOLKLORE, pp. 33-61.

_____. "The Number Three in American Culture". IN INTERPRETING FOLKLORE, pp. 3134-159.

Goldstein, Kenneth S. A GUIDE FOR FIELDWORKERS IN FOLKLORE. chapters: I, II, IV, VI, VII

Jackson, Bruce, ed. FIELDWORK. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

Section XII – FOLKLORE AND LITERATURE (THEORY AND METHOD)

Bauman Richard and J. Sherzer. EXPLORATIONS IN THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF SPEAKING. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974.

Dorson, Richard. "The identification of folklore in American literature" IN AMERICAN FOLKLORE AND THE HISTORIAN, pp. 186-203.[also, "A Postcript", pp. 205-209.

Leisy, Ernest. "Folklore in American literature". COLLEGE ENGLISH 8(1946): 122-129.

_____. "Literary versions of American folk materials". WESTERN FOLKLORE 7(1948): 43-49.

Stahl, Sandra K.D. "Studying folklore and American literature" IN HANDBOOK OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE, Dorson, ed., pp. 422-433

_____. "Literary versions of American folk materials". WESTERN FOLKLORE 7(1948): 43-49.

Section XIII – FOLKLORE AND LITERATURE (RESEARCH)

Chockrane, Timothy. "The Concept of Ecotypes in American Folklore". JOURNAL OF THE FOLKLORE INSTITUTE 24(1987): 33-55.

Cohen, Bernard. "Hawthorne and Legends" HOOSIER FOLKLORE 7(1948): 94-95.

Cuff, Roger P. "Mark Twain's Use of California Folklore in Jumping Frog Story" JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE 65(1952): 155-158.

Dargan, Amanda. "American Talkers: Expressive Styles and Occupational Choice". JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE 96(1983): 3-33.

Frantz, Ray W. "The Role of Folklore in Huckleberry Finn". AMERICAN LITERATURE 28(1956):314-327.

Gaudet, Maria. "Folk Motifs in the Short Stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne". LOUISIANA FOLKLORE MISCELLANY 6(1985): 1-5

Hoffman, Daniel G. "Irving's Use of American Folklore in 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow'" PMLA 68(1953): 425-435.

Motz, Marilyn Ferris. "Folk Expression of Time and Place: 19th Century Midwestern Rural Diaries" JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE 100(1987): 131-147.

[see also various Caribbean studies of Folklore and Literature]