

# Course Outline

## FOLK 211: Atlantic Canadian Folklore

Ian Brodie  
Jan. 5 – Apr. 5, 2011  
M & W, 11:30-12:45

office: CE-263C  
e-mail: [ian\\_brodie@cbu.ca](mailto:ian_brodie@cbu.ca)  
office hours: M, T, W, & Th, 9-10, or by appointment

### Calendar Description

*This course examines the society and culture of Atlantic Canada as a means to explore the historical context and modern manifestations of folklore and its study in this region.*

### Course Description:

This course plots a rough chronological trajectory through the folklore study of Atlantic Canada. Following a brief introductory essay, we begin in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when the impetus was on collecting “things.” As we progress, we begin to see the move towards placing these things in contexts, and locating them not solely within “a community” but as specific performance and creations of individuals within that community. By the end, we reach the contemporary understanding of folkloristic processes, whereby these “things” are not artefacts but communications within (and without) contemporary peoples.

### Evaluation

Research Assignment	February 14	20%
Discussion Leading	February 28-March 30	20%
Fieldwork Assignment	March 28	40%
Final exam (take-home)	April 18	20%

### Texts

#### Attached

Rosenberg, Neil V. 1977. Folklore in Atlantic Canada: The Enigmatic Symbol. In Kenneth MacKinnon, ed., *Atlantic Provinces Literature Colloquium Papers*, 79-86. Saint John: Atlantic Canada Institute.

#### Available at the bookstore

Fraser, Mary L. 2009. *Folklore of Nova Scotia*. Reprint of the 1932 edition with a new introduction by Ian Brodie. Halifax: Formac.

Narváez, Peter (prod.) 2006. *Newfoundland and Labrador Folklore: A sampler of songs, narrations, and tunes*. CD. St. John's: Landwash Music for the Research Centre for the Study of Music, Media, and Place, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

#### Articles available online

*The following are all links to the article page, from which you can download a PDF. These links will work from on-campus; for off-campus access, you will need to sign in through the library and search for them individually. This list is also available with live links at the course page accessible through <http://tinyurl.com/folk211>.*

- Bauman, Richard. 1972. Belsnickling in a Nova Scotia Island Community. *Western Folklore* 31.4: 229-243. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1498220>
- Bauman, Richard. 1972. The La Have Island General Store: Sociability and Verbal Art in a Nova Scotia Community. *Journal of American Folklore* 85.338: 330-343. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/539322>
- Creighton, Helen. 1950. Folklore of Victoria Beach, Nova Scotia. *Journal of American Folklore* 63.248: 131-146. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/537152>
- Fauset, Arthur Huff. 1925. Folklore from the Half-Breeds in Nova Scotia. *Journal of American Folklore* 38.148: 300-315. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/535032>
- Ives, Edward D. 1962. Satirical Songs in Maine and the Maritime Provinces of Canada. *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* 14: 65-69. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/835562>
- Ives, Sandy. 1958. The Burning Ship of Northumberland Strait: Some Notes on that Apparition. *Midwest Folklore* 8.4: 199-203. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4317752>
- Jack, Edward. 1895. Maliseet Legends. *Journal of American Folklore* 8.30: 193-208. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/534094> .
- LaBelle, Ronald. 2008. Native Witchcraft Beliefs in Acadian, Maritime and Newfoundland Folklore. *Ethnologies* 30.2: 137-152. Available at <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/019949ar>
- Lovelace, Martin. 2001. Jack and His Masters: Real Worlds and Tale Worlds in Newfoundland Folktales. *Journal of Folklore Research* 38.1-2: 149-170. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3814806>
- McDavid, Jodi. 2008. The Fiddle Burning Priest of Mabou. *Ethnologies* 30.2 115-136. Available at <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/019948ar>
- Narváez, Peter. 1994. "Tricks and Fun": Subversive Pleasures at Newfoundland Wakes. *Western Folklore* 53.4: 263-293. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1499450>
- Pocius, Gerald. 1979. Hooked Rugs in Newfoundland: The Representation of Social Structure in Design. *Journal of American Folklore* 92.365: 273-284. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/539415>
- Speck, F. G. 1915. Some Micmac Tales from Cape Breton Island. *Journal of American Folklore* 28.107: 59-69. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/534558>
- Tallman, Richard S. 1974. "You Can Almost Picture It": The Aesthetic of a Nova Scotia Storyteller. *Folklore Forum* 7.2: 121-130. Available at <http://hdl.handle.net/2022/1345>
- Thomas, Gerald. 1989. Functions of the Newfoundland Outhouse. *Western Folklore* 48.3. 221-243. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1499740>
- Tye, Diane. 1989. Local Character Anecdotes: A Nova Scotia Case Study. *Western Folklore* 48.3: 181-199. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1499738>

## **Assignments**

### **Reflective Research Assignment**

**February 14th**

In a five to seven page essay, and employing both library research and a reflection on your own experience, answer one of the following questions.

1. What do you think Rosenberg means by there being an “ambivalence” towards folklore felt by Atlantic Canadians? Provide or suggest further examples to illustrate your answer.
2. Take a popular publication of Atlantic Canadian folklore (there are dozens, many at the library, many throughout new and used bookstores in town), and do a critical review of it. What genres are represented, and what are absent? What is the audience for this book? What and who is represented by it?
3. Atlantic Canadian is home to a variety of popular artists expressly working within the “folk” idiom, and the traditional arts – song, storytelling, physical arts, cooking – are a large part of the tourism industry. Using specific examples, what are the consequences – for good or ill – of the shift to a market-influenced folk culture?

(If you would like to suggest your own question, I am open to that, although please run it past me first.)

### **Discussion Leader assignment                      February 28 to March 30**

In the last five weeks of the semester we will read a number of case studies in Atlantic Canadian folklore on a range of topics. For this assignment:

- sign up for **one** of them (currently, we’re at two students per article);
- prepare a brief overview of the reading, which outlines the argument the author is trying to make and the research upon which s/he is basing it;
- do some additional background research so that you more fully understand the context of the article (for example, in Narváz’s article on Newfoundland wakes, you should be able to give a working definition of “counter-hegemonic”; in Lovelace’s, you should know who Holbek is, etc.);
- prepare **three** questions for discussion (which means not questions about the content but about what the argument means, or asking whether similar activities exist in differing contexts, etc.).
- be prepared to lead (with me, not instead of me) the class discussion.

At the beginning of class, you will distribute a **one-page single-spaced** handout with the overview, the background research in point-form, and the questions for discussion. An example will be distributed in class.

Although the end result may appear to be a one-page assignment, there is still a fair amount of research and work required. Collectively they form the backbone of a “study-guide” that will assist you and the entire class in the take-home exam. It is certainly not something that can be started the day before.

#### **Collaborative option**

This is not a group assignment: however, if you and the other student(s) for your reading wish to co-ordinate your effort that is welcome. Furthermore, if you wish to make it a true group assignment, where you are given the same mark for a shared final product, I will entertain that. I would still expect the equivalent amount of ‘product’ (i.e. a group of two would have a two-page single-spaced handout, with a longer overview, more background research, more questions for discussion, etc.).

### **Fieldwork Assignment                                      March 28**

The essay topic can be on any aspect of Atlantic Canadian Folklore. I can assist you with finding additional resources or narrowing your topic. Students are also invited to do comparative studies, for example, to work on an area or item of folklore they are familiar with which has similarities to folklore found in Atlantic Canada. Library and/or archive research and some ethnographic research or fieldwork is required. Sources are to be noted in a bibliography. The essay should be approximately 8-10 pages.

## Take-home Exam

**April 18**

One last essay question (there will be a choice), similar in format to the Reflective Research assignment, with the expectation for incorporating the technical vocabulary and examples gleaned from the semester's reading.

## Reading Schedule and Course Breakdown

	Monday	Wednesday
January 5		First day business
January 10 & 12	Rosenberg, "Folklore in Atlantic Canada" (attached)	Jack, "Maliseet Legends"; Speck, "Micmac Tales"
January 17 & 19	Fauset, "Tales from the Half-Breeds"	Brodie, Introduction to Fraser
January 24 & 26	Fraser: Introductory, Chapters 1, 2, and 3	Fraser: Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7
January 31 & February 2	Fraser: Chapters 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12	Fraser: Chapters 13, 14, 15, and 16
February 7 & 9	Creighton, "Folklore of Victoria Beach"	Ives, "Burning Ship"; "Satirical Songs"
February 14 & 16	Narváez, Tracks 1-13 (read all liner notes, artist biographies, and lyrics) <b>Research Assignment due</b>	Narváez, Tracks 14-27 (read all liner notes, artist biographies, and lyrics)
Reading week		
February 28 & March 2	Pocius, "Hooked Rugs"	Thomas, "Functions of the Newfoundland Outhouse"
March 7 & 9	Bauman, "Belsnickling"	Narváez, "Tricks and Fun"
March 14 & 16	Bauman, "The Lahave General Store"	Tallman, "You Can Almost Picture It"
March 21 & 23	Tye, "Local Characters"	Labelle, "Native Witchcraft Beliefs"
March 28 & 30	Lovelace, "Jack and His Masters" <b>Fieldwork Assignment Due</b>	McDavid, "The Fiddle Burning Priest"
April 4	Take-home exam distributed: evaluations	