

LIT 4322- Witches, Spirits, and Men of Steel: Folklore and World Literature (Section 4322, Class # 19769), Summer B 2021

Instructor Name: Romy Rajan

Course meeting times & locations: MWF | Period 4 (12:30 PM - 1:45 PM) Meeting ID: 699 029 4600, TR – Asynchronous classes

Office Location and Hours: Zoom meeting ID: 699 029 4600, Mondays, Tuesdays, Period 3 (11:00 AM -12:15 PM)

Course website: Canvas

Instructor Email: rrajan@ufl.edu

Course Description: Folklore and myth are often considered repositories of a past that has nothing to do with the present. Such a belief, however, belies the role played by myths and folktales in the formation of the modern nation as well as other modern institutions. This course shall look at how contemporary novels and films incorporate folklore into their narratives to build bridges between the present and the past. We will read/watch works that do this to a) reclaim pasts that have been marginalized or b) generate ideological covers for contemporary injustices by situating the folk in identitarian traditions. Such works often mirror the structure of folklore, offering an important means of situating oneself in a globalized world where identities are visibly unstable and ever-changing. We will explore how this role of the folk is often ambivalent and cannot be rooted completely either in the past or the present.

Course Objectives:

During this course, students will:

1. Engage with works of literature that engage with folk traditions while often creating their own hybrid traditions.
2. Discuss multiple definitions of the folk and how fluid definitions of the folk are negotiated through narration.
3. Construct coherent arguments about texts by completing academic and public-facing assignments that allow for an understanding of the places under analysis.
4. Participate and collaborate with other members of the class and formulate responses to contemporary debates on belonging and citizenship as they are introduced in class.

COVID Statement: I am aware of the fact that COVID-19 continues to impact our daily lives. Thus, if you are experiencing any hardships because of the virus, please contact me as soon as possible so that we may make any necessary arrangements contingent on your circumstances.

Required Texts (you do not require a specific edition):

Amos Tutuola, *Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952)

Salman Rushdie, *The Golden House* (2017)

Ngugi wa Thiongo, *The Perfect Nine* (2018)

Helen Oyeyemi, *The Icarus Girl* (2007)

Assignments (see below for Grading Rubric):

Quizzes (10% of Final Grade)

There will be ten quizzes conducted over the course of the semester to assess students' knowledge of the reading material to be discussed in class on that day.

Keywords Assignment (25% of Final Grade)

Identify five concepts relevant to an understanding of folklore and explain them to an imaginary reader in one page each (double-spaced). You will need to define the term and possibly offer a short history of its use. You can use an example of the concept's application (in literature, music, film, etc.) but the focus will remain on a conceptual explanation.

Presentation (25% of Final Grade)

Each student will present a 5-minute paper based on a work that examines the folk. The presentation can focus on the ways in which traditions are invented or modified. Students can also analyze the ways in which texts allow for the crossing of folk traditions and why such crossings happen (what happens to traditions when such crossings occur?). Students are encouraged to maintain an interactive approach during the presentation. The written version of the presentation will be submitted three days after the oral presentation. You will need to inform the instructor of your choice of text within the first week of the course so that we can prepare a schedule of presentations.

Final Paper (40% of Final Grade)

Students will create a well-researched paper about a text or a group of texts that is a part of the syllabus. Your paper will take a clear position on a topic connected to folklore and its presence in World Literature and will be supplemented by at least 5 secondary sources. Students will need to consult the instructor while in the process of deciding their topic, either during office hours or over e-mails.

Course Policies:

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:* Attendance is mandatory and will be taken daily. Use allotted absences wisely, (for emergencies, major illness) as you would for any job. Students will lose 10 points for a fourth absence and 30 for a fifth. A total of six absences results in a failure of the course.
3. Students are required to arrive to class on time as late arrivals disrupt the flow of the lecture and interrupt discussions. Three late arrivals to class will count as an absence. Arriving later than 15 minutes will count as a complete absence. Latecomers are responsible for informing the instructor of their presence following the class.
4. Classroom behavior: Diverse opinions on the text under discussion are vital to lively classroom discussions. Intolerant remarks about peers' comments are not allowed. Disrespectful behavior towards your peers or the instructor will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class. Students are responsible for the maintenance of the decorum of the classroom and maintaining an atmosphere conducive to productive discussions.

Cell phone and Laptop policy: Students must turn cell phones to silent mode before coming to class. Cell phones cannot be used in class. Laptops, e-readers, or tablets can be used only to view

material that is pertinent to the texts under discussion. If I find you visibly distracted while using these devices, I will assume that you are using them for purposes not related to the class and you will receive a reduced grade for class participation.

5. *UF's policy on Sexual Harassment*: The University of Florida is committed to providing a safe educational, working, and residential environment that is free from sexual harassment or misconduct directed towards any and all members of the community:
<https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/title-ix-rights/>
6. You will need to submit all papers through Canvas, as word documents. Submission in any other format will receive a reduced grade.
7. *Late Papers/Assignments*: Late submissions will not be accepted except under extenuating circumstances. These will be penalized 10% of the overall grade for every day that the assignment is late.
8. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities*. Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
9. *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism*. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: 'On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.'" The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.

A Student must not represent as the Student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

- a. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
 - b. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.
 - c. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
 - d. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author.
10. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>), which will provide appropriate documentation to give your instructor early in the semester.
 11. *Students who are in distress* or who are in need of counseling or urgent help: please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to you. UF's Counseling and Wellness Center offers additional support: 352-392-1575, or contact them online: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>
 12. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
 13. *Grade Appeals*. Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Kenneth Kidd, Undergraduate Coordinator at the Department of English (Turlington Hall 4370). Please contact Dr. Kidd at kbkidd@ufl.edu. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
 14. *Course Evaluations*. Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages requesting that you do this online: <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>

15. *Policy on environmental sustainability.* Whenever possible, I will use paper-sparing electronic media to distribute our course materials. Consider purchasing electronic editions of assigned texts when they are available or used copies of print texts. If you do not elect to keep your print books, consider sharing them with others after the semester ends. (For example, you could donate them to the Alachua County [Friends of the Library](#) annual book sale.)

SYLLABUS

Wk no.	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Assignment Due
1, 6/28- 7/2	Course Introduction	Alan Dundes, "Who are the folk?" (1980)	Amos Tutuola, <i>Palm-Wine Drinkard</i> (1952)	Amos Tutuola, <i>Palm-Wine Drinkard</i> (1952)	Amos Tutuola, <i>Palm-Wine Drinkard</i> (1952)	
2, 7/5- 7/9	No Class, July 4 Observance	Dorothy Noyes, "The Social Base of Folklore" (2012)	Helen Oyeyemi, <i>The Icarus Girl</i> (2007)	Helen Oyeyemi, <i>The Icarus Girl</i> (2007)	Helen Oyeyemi, <i>The Icarus Girl</i> (2007)	
3, 7/12- 7/16	Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: <i>Inventing Traditions</i> (1983)	Raymond Williams, "Introduction," <i>Keywords</i> (1976)	"The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," Terence Ranger (1983)	Salman Rushdie, <i>The Golden House</i> (2017)	Salman Rushdie, <i>The Golden House</i> (2017)	
4, 7/19- 7/23	Salman Rushdie, <i>The Golden House</i> (2017)	Salman Rushdie, <i>The Golden House</i> (2017)	Gauri Vishwanathan, "The Beginnings of English Literary Study" (1989)	Urvashi Butalia, <i>The Other Side of Silence</i> , Chapters 1-2 (1998)	Saadat Hasan Manto, "It happened in 1919," "The dog of Titwal"	Keywords Assignment
5, 7/26- 7/30	Urvashi Butalia, "Memory," (1998)	Kwame Anthony Appiah, "The Invention of Africa" (1992)	Achille Mbembe, "Time on the Move" (2001)	Ngugi wa Thiongo, <i>The Perfect Nine</i> (2018)	Ngugi wa Thiongo, <i>The Perfect Nine</i> (2018)	
6, 8/2- 8/6	Ngugi wa Thiongo, <i>The Perfect Nine</i> (2018)	David Harvey, "Freedom's Just Another Word..." (2005)	Zack Snyder, <i>Man of Steel</i> (2013)	Zack Snyder, <i>Man of Steel</i> , continued. (2013)	Course Evaluations and Conclusion	Final Paper

Grading/Assessment Rubric

A	The paper displays conceptual clarity and engages with the text and its contributions to folk. The student makes a genuine attempt at building on existing work on the subject and is aware of how their work fits into this discussion. Details from the text and its techniques are skillfully included in order to substantiate the claims made. There are few grammatical or syntactical errors in the paper.
A-	The paper attempts to construct an argument using evidence from the text and secondary sources and is reasonably successful. While the student does engage with scholarly material on their subject, it is unclear what position their work takes in regard to this material. There are few grammatical and syntactical errors that disrupt the flow of the essay.
B+	The argument uses evidence mostly from the text and is relevant to an understanding of the use or presence of folklore in it. The paper does engage with scholarship on the subject but does not synthesize the sources or incorporate them into the argument well. There are some grammatical and syntactical errors, but they do not disrupt the flow of the essay in any significant way.
B	The paper has an interesting argument about folklore but does not develop it adequately. The engagement with secondary sources is incidental but at least some of the sources used are relevant. There are some grammatical and syntactical errors, but they do not disrupt the flow of the essay in any significant way.
B-	The paper is mostly descriptive and does not make a clear argument about its subject and does not engage with scholarship on the texts. The paper does use material from the texts analyzed and is able to show familiarity with the plot and narrative. There are some grammatical and syntactical errors, but they do not disrupt the flow of the essay in any significant way.
C+	The paper is almost entirely descriptive and does not have a clear thesis. The paper does use material from the texts analyzed but the result is not coherent. There are grammatical and syntactical mistakes that affect the accessibility of the argument.
C	The paper is confused regarding its argument and is unable to synthesize textual and contextual material well. There are grammatical and syntactical mistakes that affect the accessibility of the argument.
C-	The paper is entirely descriptive or makes an argument that is incorrect. Grammatical and syntactical errors make the paper difficult to access.
D	The paper displays little knowledge of the text, its formal elements or the period during which it was produced. It is unable to construct a coherent argument and is replete with grammatical and syntactical errors.