

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

www.mlcs.ualberta.ca

**2015-2016 SCAND 399 A2: Scandinavia Through Folklore
(Fall Term)**

Time: TR 12:30pm-1:50pm

Place: T B 96

Instructor: Dr Natalie Van Deusen

E-mail: vandeuse@ualberta.ca

Office: Arts 316-D

Office Hours: TR 10:00am-11:00am or by appt.

Telephone: (no office phones)

Fax: 780-492-9106

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/exams>
- 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:

This course explores Scandinavian folk literature as an expression of the human experience from pre-industrial to contemporary Scandinavia. Readings, lectures, discussion and assignments are designed to develop a comparative understanding of the genres of folktale, secular and religious legend, ballad and jokes as distinct narrative expressions of beliefs, practices and worldviews. In combination, the course's investigation of three types of readings – the folk literature itself, articles presenting literary and cultural analysis, and adaptations of folk narrative in literary tales and drama - encourages a critical approach to the notion of folk literature as representative of the

national “folk soul” or evidence of primitive origin. At the same time, the course focuses on the ways in which folk literature plays a role in formation of cultural and national identity, criticism of social and political hierarchies, and definition of the self and other. Examples of folk performance in music, art and film supplement the course readings. It is expected that each student will be a prepared and engaged contributor to collective and individual learning in the class.

Texts:

- *Folk Groups and Folk Genres*, Elliot Oring, Utah State U. Press, ISBN 98087421128X
- *Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend*, Reimund Kvideland and Henning Sehmsdorf, U. of Minnesota Press, ISBN 980816619670
- *Scandinavian Ballads*, Sven Rossel WITS2, U. of Wisconsin (No ISBN)
- *Norwegian Folktales*, Asbjørnsen and Moe, Transl. Pat Shaw, Pantheon Books, ISBN 980394710541
- *Peer Gynt*, Henrik Ibsen, U. of Minnesota Press ISBN 78 0816609123
- Readings on eClass (as noted in daily schedule)

Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):

Participation	20%
Midterm exam (October 15)	25%
Responses on eClass (6)	20%
Presentation	10%
Final exam (December 15, 2:00pm)	25%

Date of Deferred Final Exam: February 12, 9:00am

Explanatory notes on Assignments:

Participation and in-class assignments

The course utilizes a combination of lecture and discussion, and requires your presence and active participation at each class meeting. It is expected that you will show through class discussion and small group work in class that you have read the material, given careful thought to the meaning of the readings, and prepared responses to study questions. Each individual contribution is important to learning in the class. Your daily participation grade is based on the degree to which you:

- Attend class regularly and arrive at class on time;
- Are engaged and focused during lectures, group work and class discussion;
- Demonstrate you have read the material through your contribution of well-informed and reflective interpretations, comments and questions in class;
- Show respect for your classmates’ contributions to class;
- Take responsibility to ask for clarification or further discussion of an assignment when necessary;

NOTE: More than **two** absences during the semester for other than emergencies will result in a reduction in your final grade by a half letter grade for each additional absence above two.

Responses on eClass (6)

This course requires that you have access both to the Internet and to a University of Alberta email account. Your weekly response will be posted on our discussion board at our class's eClass site.

You will be asked to write a total of **6 responses** during the course of the semester (there are **11 possible opportunities** indicated on the course schedule by *). Your response (a half page to one page in length--that is, approximately 250-500 words--once a week) should be posted to our class discussion board before our **Thursday** class meeting by **no later than 9:30 a.m.** Late submissions will not be given credit (i.e. if you miss a class, you may not comment retrospectively on readings that we have already discussed).

To locate the topics for the discussion board on our eClass webpage, log on to eClass and select our course from the menu; select "Weekly Responses" from the left-hand navigation bar; then select the appropriate topic and date. Then click on "Add a new discussion topic" and post your response. When you are finished, click "Post to forum."

This list is the place for you to pose questions about the reading, to propose topics that you would like to discuss in class, to say what you liked or didn't like. Topics for discussion will be suggested prior to each class; you may focus on one of these issues or choose to write on another topic of interest to you if you wish. A good weekly response will do the following:

- mention at least one specific passage from the week's reading that you would like to discuss in class
- critically analyze the passage (your comment should not just summarize its content or make vague noises about its "importance")
- relate the week's reading to other readings or discussions in the course
- be made in a timely fashion
- be grammatically correct and proofread

Responses are graded on a scale of 0-5 points. To receive all 5 points, your response will have sufficiently met all of the above criteria. Our class discussion will be guided in part by your postings, so please write on something that interests you and that will (hopefully) also interest the rest of us. *Make sure that you print out a copy of your response and bring it to class with you, since you should always assume that you will be asked to elaborate on the points you made prior to class.*

Presentation

Article Report (groups of 2-3). Each group will present one of the scholarly articles noted in the weekly schedule. The presentation of approx. 10 minutes must provide a statement of the article's/chapter's overall focus, salient points that inform our study topic for that week, and an example and/or application of the content to our reading for that day. A handout or power point should contain important quotes and points of the presentation. Each group presentation must include at least two discussion questions for the class as a whole.

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 attendance and participation are required, and will be monitored by a daily attendance sheet.

Out of respect for the instructor and other students wanting to learn, texting and other cell phone use is not allowed in the classroom.

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, assignments may be handed in with a 2%-per-class-day penalty 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 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	Outstanding: Superior performance showing understanding and knowledge of the subject matter far exceeding expectations.
A	90-94%	4.0	Excellent: Superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.
A-	86-89%	3.7	Very good: Clearly above average performance with complete knowledge of subject matter.
B+	82-85%	3.3	Very 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	Minimal Pass: 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	Fail: Unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.

Note: Bursaries of \$150.00 will be provided by the Norwegian service club *Sons of Norway-Torskeklubben* to students who have successfully completed a Scandinavian course (incl. SCAND 399) with a minimum grade of B-.

Course Schedule

Weekly Schedule of Topics and Readings

The list below presents weekly topics, questions to ponder related to those topics, readings for each day, and dates for response papers and the presentation. Any necessary changes to this schedule will be communicated to you either in class or by e-mail, and will be updated on eClass. You are responsible to know this schedule well, and refer to it often.

Week One: Introduction and Overview

Tuesday, Sept. 1 Syllabus, Scandinavia

- How do we define Scandinavia? How are the peoples and their narratives related to one another through geographical proximity, history and culture?

Thursday, Sept. 3 Concepts of Folklore

- What do we mean by the concept of “folklore”?

- How can we distinguish legend, folktale and ballad from one another, and why is it important?
- Different types of folklore: folk art, music, ritual, dance, clothing, food, symbols, narratives.

Reading:

Folk Groups and Folk Genres “On the Concepts of Folklore” pages 1-18

Come to class prepared with an example of folklore to discuss

Week Two: Origins in Narrative and Scholarship

Tuesday, Sept. 8 Folk Narrative and Identity; Etiological Tales (Origins 1)

- How does folk literature help define who we are, give image to the unknown, and entertain us in its performance?
- Origins 1: Why does the fox have a white-tipped tail? How did a mountain range get seven peaks?
- Was there ever an “original” legend or folktale?
- Is folk narrative more like a plant or a fossil?

Readings:

Folk Groups and Folk Genres, “Folk Narratives” pages 121-145

Norwegian Folktales 106-107 and 5 and 8

Examples of Variants: “The Man and Woman Who Changed Jobs”, “The Man Who Did the Housework”, “The Man Who Was to Take Care of the House” (eClass)

*Thursday, Sept. 10 Folk Literature Collection and Scholarship; Building a Nation (Origins 2)

- What prompted folk narrative collectors to commit oral stories to written form?
- What are the critical responses to notions of folk narrative as “a mirror of the past” and a preservation of origins?
- How was nation-building “romantic?”

Readings:

“Folklore and National Identity” (eClass)

Scandinavian Folk Belief: 12-37

Norwegian Folktales 158-160

Week Three: Folk Literature, History and Religion

Tuesday, Sept. 15 The Black Death in Narrative and Art

- How is death portrayed in Black Death legends? Who is that woman with the broom?

- What is the relationship between the spread of the plague and the migration of the legends?

Readings:

“The Jostedal Grouse,” “The Church in the Woods,” “The Wizards of the Westman Islands” (eClass)

Scandinavian Folk Belief pages 344-351

“Ships, Fog and Traveling Pairs: Plague Legend Migration in Scandinavia” (**Group 1**)

***Thursday, Sept. 17 Historical Legends and Ballads of Chivalry**

- How do ballads contribute to collective memory of the past through both form and content?
- How do ballads function differently from legend in conveying historical event?
- What is chivalry according to these ballads?

Readings:

Scandinavian Ballads pages 31-39 and 41-49

SFB 331-343

Little Kari, Dear Ella, Bendik and Årolilja, Big Brother and Little Brother, The Mother-to be (eClass)

“Historical Legend and Historical Truth” (**Group 2**)

Week Four: Witches, Sorcerers and the Devil; Healing and Magic

Tuesday, Sept. 22 Religious Ballads and Folk Belief

- How is folk narrative a part of Christian religious practice?
- Is the relationship of folk belief and Christian belief problematic or complementary?
- What power did words and formulas play in sickness and healing?

Readings:

Folk Groups and Folk Genres “Religious Folklore” pages 45-69

Scandinavian Ballads pages 25-29

SFB: 131-148

St. Olav’s Sailing Competition (eClass)

“Narratives of Magic and Healing” (**Group 3**)

***Thursday, Sept. 24 The Witch and the Devil in Folk Belief**

- How did people know a witch when they saw one? How did oral narrative create witches and sorcerers?
- In the common folkloric tradition of oppositions, who were the devil’s opponents?
- How were legends of the devil both religious and social narratives?

Readings:

SFB: 161-163, 170-175, 180-199, 281-295

Norwegian Folktales 168-169

“How Do You Know She’s a Witch?” (Group 4)

Week Five: Spaces and Places of Humans, the Supernatural

Tuesday, Sept. 29 The Human Spirit: Premonition, Omen, and One’s Second Self; Ghosts!

- How are premonitions and omens given form in folk narrative?
- What elements of ghost stories provide a form of social control?

Readings:

SFB: 60-73, 87-125

“Who Ya Gonna Call?” (Group 5)

***Thursday, Oct. 1 Werewolves and the Man-Bear; the “wild hunt”**

Readings:

SFB: 74-81, 272-275

Week Six: Tales of the Hidden People; Tales of Marriage and Family

Tuesday, Oct. 6 Trolls, Elves and Wood Sprites...

- What do tales of the hidden people communicate about beliefs and worldview?
- What is the significance of the many types of hidden people?
- How were tales of peaceful (and not-so-peaceful) coexistence between preternatural and supernatural beings and humans also narratives of class, ethnic group, gender and occupation?

Readings:

NF: 9-12, 67-76, 81-83, 97-101

SFB: 205-229, 238-273

“The Hidden People” (Group 6)

***Thursday, Oct. 8 Tales of Marriage and Family**

- What are the collective comments on marriage as told through these tales?
- How does humor play a role in setting issues of gender in focus?

Readings:

NF: 13-14, 112-114, 178-181

eClass readings TBA

“The Folktale Heroine Script” (Group 7)

Week Seven: Tales of Marriage and Family Folk Narrative as Social Opposition

Tuesday, Oct. 13 Tales from Common Folk to Kings

- What social dynamics do these tales reveal?
- What is the composite profile of the Ash Lad?
- What are the literary elements that make folktales different from legends?

Readings:

NF: 15-16, 17-19, 56-60, 77-80, 150-157, 158

eClass readings TBA

Thursday, Oct. 15 Midterm Exam

Week Eight: Sámi Legend/Romany Music; Jocular Ballad and Tale

Tuesday, Oct. 20 Sami Legends and Romany Music

- What additional boundaries and dynamics of insider/outsider do you find in these legends?
- What is the relationship between cultural and national narrative, folk narrative and Christianity?

Readings:

“The Wolf with No Fur on His Feet,” “A Ship Is Sung Home From Bergen,” “A Sea Troll Wants to Take a Girl” (eClass)

“These Stories Will Not Lead You to Heaven” (**Group 8**)

Folk Groups, Folk Genres “Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Folklore” 23-44 (**Group 9**)

*Thursday, Oct. 22 Jocular Ballads and Off-color Tales!

- What is inverted in the jocular ballads? Why? To what effect?
- How are the rather crude tales also appropriate to the study of folk narrative?

Readings:

“The Farting Stone,” “The Boy Who Grew Up in a Barrel,” “The Stupid Boy Who Didn’t Know About Women” (eClass)

Scandinavian Ballads: 57-58

“Erotic Narrative and the Construction of Gender in Pre-modern Sweden” (**Group 10**)

“Jocular Ballads and Carnival Culture” (**Group 11**)

Week Nine: Jocular Ballad and Tale; From Legend to Drama

Tuesday, Oct. 27 *Peer Gynt* from Legend to Drama

- How are lies, truth and folk narrative related in the opening act of *Peer Gynt*?
- What folk elements do you find in these acts?
- Is Ibsen celebrating or criticizing national romantic ideas here?

- How do you, as an informed reader of folk narrative, read this play differently from someone with no or very little knowledge of, in this case, Norwegian folk narrative?

Readings:

The Peter Gynt legend (eClass)

Peer Gynt Foreword, ix-xxvi, Act I, 1-38, Acts II and III, 39-90

***Thursday, Oct. 29**

- Is Peer a developing hero in this play?
- Who *is* the Gyntian self?

Readings:

Peer Gynt Act IV, 91-149

Week Ten: *Peer Gynt*

Tuesday, Nov. 3

- Why does Ibsen base his main character on a folk legend?
- Film: *Peer Gynt*

Readings:

Peer Gynt Act V, 150-209

***Thursday, Nov. 5**

- Film: *Peer Gynt*

Week Eleven: READING WEEK – NO CLASS!

Week Twelve: Jokes and Folk Narrative in Our Midst

Tuesday, Nov. 17 Contemporary Legend

- How do contemporary legends define the “insider” and “outsider” of a community?
- Is there continuity between “older” traditional legend and legend of today?

Reading:

SFB: 379-392

S “The Warning,” “The Man in the Sou’wester Hat,” “The Ship’s Bells Warn,” “Refuses to Tear Down Ghost Barn,” “Tromsø Approves Ghosts in Barn,” “Magic and Sorcery in Hallingdal” (eClass)

“Legend Today” (**Group 12**)

***Thursday, Nov. 19 Jokes and Rumor**

- What’s so funny about Nazis and Swedes/Norwegians/Danes?
- What boundaries are created through jokes as oral narrative?
- How is performance important to joke telling?

- How can we relate the process of publishing jokes to publishing folk tales?

Reading:

“Heil Hitler-God Save the King: Jokes and the Norwegian Resistance,” (**Group 13**)

“The Ethnic Joke in Denmark” (**Group 14**)

Week Thirteen: Folk Literature Today

Tuesday, Nov. 24

Folk Literature and Mass Media

- Is contemporary folk literature told through media ”serious” folklore?
- What processes of identity formation take place through media dissemination of contemporary folklore?
- What do new variants of traditional folk narrative tell us of the use of the past in the present?
- Music: Black Metal, *Gåte*, etc.
- Film: *The Troll Hunter*

“Folklore and Mass Media” (**Group 15**)

***Thursday, Nov. 26**

- Film: *The Troll Hunter*
-

Week Fourteen: Folk Belief Today and the “Big Questions” of Folklore

Tuesday, Dec. 1

The Spirits of Iceland (movie)

- What is the nature of folk belief in Iceland today?
- How does folk belief intersect with Christian belief according to the pastor interviewed?

***Thursday, Dec. 3**

Panel Discussion and Wrap-up

- Through folk literature, how are the following oppositions further defined or complicated: rural vs. urban, oral vs. written narrative, male vs. female, uneducated vs. educated, belief vs. superstition, truth vs. lies/fiction, rich vs. poor, past vs. present, and national identity vs. cultural identity?
- Is folk literature more like a fossil or a plant?