

# 367 SAMPLE SYLLABUS

## ENGLISH 367.05

### THE U.S. FOLK EXPERIENCE: READING AND WRITING ETHNOGRAPHY

#### OVERVIEW

The overall goal of English 367 is to build on the skills you obtained in English 110 and to further improve your writing and critical thinking skills. This particular section, 367.05, is designed to employ the core concepts and methods of the field of folklore as the basis for reading assignments and writing projects. Because the theme of this course is “The U.S. Folk Experience,” we will begin with a brief introduction to basic concepts of American folklore and ethnography, including folk groups, tradition, and fieldwork methodology, focusing on how these concepts and methodologies contribute to the development of critical reading, writing, and thinking skills. We will read examples of ethnographic writing by American folklorists and others in related fields and use these examples as starting points for discussions of studying a group and representing that group’s folklore through ethnographic writing.

**Course Readings:** There will be a significant amount of reading in this course. Some of the course readings will introduce you to ethnographic methodologies and writing strategies and some will provide examples of “reading” culture that may be new to you (some will, perhaps, do both). You will be required to respond to course readings on our course Carmen website, as indicated below.

**Course Assignments:** Throughout the quarter we will work on a variety of formal and informal writing assignments, each designed to add skills to your writing toolbox while fostering discussions about the strategic purposes of different kinds of research methodologies and genres of writing. The final project will require that you conduct ethnographic fieldwork that you will then analyze and present in a final paper.

#### Goals and Objectives for the General Education Curriculum

##### *Writing and Related Skills*

##### Goals/Rationale:

Writing courses across the disciplines develop students' skills in writing, reading, critical thinking, and oral expression.

##### Learning Objectives:

1. Students apply basic skills in expository writing
2. Students demonstrate critical thinking through written and oral expression
3. Students retrieve and use written information analytically and effectively

#### REQUIRED TEXTS

Bonnie Stone Sunstein and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater, *FieldWorking: Reading and Writing Research*, Third Edition, New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2006.

A coursepack available from Grade A Notes, 22 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. (across High St. from campus)

A grammar/usage handbook of your choice.

## ASSIGNMENTS

### Writing Projects 1, 2, & 3

You will receive detailed instructions on each of the three major assignments. However, you should begin thinking about the topics that you might write about immediately.

*Writing Project 1* (4-5 typed pages): In this assignment you will write about a behavior, belief, narrative or artifact that is significant to a folk group (family, community, peer or other) you belong to or with which you are very familiar.

*Writing Project 2* (6-8 typed pages) & *3* (8-10 typed pages): Writing Projects 2 & 3 are separate parts of a larger collection project that you will conduct. You will choose a group, community, tradition, place, or other topic relevant to this course and conduct primary and secondary research. In Writing Project 2 you will describe your project and discuss relevant secondary research that you have conducted in preparation for your own fieldwork on this topic. In Writing Project 3, the final paper, you will present the results of your fieldwork on this topic, including your own analysis and reflection. **Because such a large portion of your final grade hinges on this two-part project, you are strongly encouraged to discuss your topic ideas with me before getting started. The choosing of a promising and interesting topic is key to a successful project.**

### Drafts

Writing is a process and good writing takes time. One major goal of this class will be the formation of habits of writing as a multiple-draft process. You will be required to bring multiple copies of the drafts of each of the three writing projects to class on the date drafts are due, for peer response activities and to turn in to me. I will return drafts (ungraded) with comments about the major revisions that you should make before submitting your final paper. You should plan to work your way through *multiple* drafts on your own and/or with me during office hours. All drafts and peer feedback must be turned in with your final papers. **Failure to submit a draft will result in the lowering of your final grade on that paper by one full letter grade.**

### Informal writing

This course will involve extensive informal writing in order to practice the skills that we are working to develop. This writing will take place both during and outside of class. For each of the readings indicated in the “Daily Schedule” portion of this syllabus you will be required to post a response on our course Carmen site ([carmen.osu.edu](http://carmen.osu.edu)). You must post your response by **10 a.m. of the day of the class period for which the reading is assigned** and you will be expected to read the responses posted by your classmates, and come to class ready to participate in a discussion of the readings. Additional informal homework and in-class writing assignments will be provided throughout the quarter.

### Group presentations

You will be assigned to a small group responsible for one reading during the quarter. Groups should use the responses posted by your classmates as a *starting point* for a presentation

followed by the facilitation of a class discussion about the readings and related issues. You must come prepared with a brief summary of the article and discussion questions based on the related concepts we are dealing with and any other relevant issues of interest to the group. Every group member must participate in the presentation (everyone must have a speaking role).

### **Participation**

Critical thinking and writing skills are most successfully developed through the sharing of ideas through both oral and written means. Therefore, a major requirement of this course is that you come to each class ready to discuss the readings and written assignments with an open mind and a desire to engage with the class.

### **EVALUATION**

Writing Project 1:	15%
Writing Project 2:	25%
Writing Project 3:	30%
Informal writing:	15%
Group presentation:	5%
Participation:	10%

### **COURSE POLICIES**

**I will not accept papers, neither drafts nor final papers, via email.**

**Attendance** is important to the success of this class and to your development as a writer. Therefore, each unexcused absence after three will result in the lowering of your final grade by a third of a grade. Excused absences, such as those for documented illness, family tragedy, religious observance, or travel for inter-collegiate athletics, will not affect your grade if you bring me written documentation the next class.

**Tardiness** is disruptive to the classroom environment, and prevents you from fully participating and assimilating the information and materials discussed in class. Excessive tardiness will lower your participation grade.

**Plagiarism** is the unauthorized use of the words or ideas of another person. It is a serious academic offense that can result in referral to the Committee on Academic Misconduct and failure for the course. Please remember that at no point during the writing process should the work of others be presented as your own.

**Class Cancellation Policy:** In the unlikely event due to emergency, I will contact you via email and request that a note on department letterhead be placed on the door. In addition, I will contact you as soon as possible following the cancellation to let you know what will be expected of you for our next class meeting.

### **RESOURCES**

The **Ombudsman of the Writing Programs**, Matthew Cariello, mediates conflicts between students and teachers in English 367 and 110. His Winter 2007 office hours are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 11.30-1.00 in Denney Hall 533. He can also be reached at [cariello.1@osu.edu](mailto:cariello.1@osu.edu) and 292-5778. All conversations with the Ombudsman are confidential.

All members of the OSU community are invited to discuss their writing with a trained consultant at the **Writing Center**. The Center offers the following services for free:

- Help with any assignment (ranging from lab reports to dissertations) at any stage of the writing process (brainstorming, thesis development, revising, etc.)
- One-to-one tutorials at 475 Mendenhall (Monday-Friday 9:30-5:30) or the Younkin Success Center (Monday-Thursday 5:30-7:30)
- Carmen chat system ([www.carmen.osu.edu](http://www.carmen.osu.edu))
- Please visit [www.cstw.org](http://www.cstw.org) or call 688-4291 to make an appointment.

The **Office for Disability Services**, located in 150 Pomerene Hall offers services for students with documented disabilities. Contact the ODS at 2-3307.

**Additional Resources** for this course are available on our Carmen site at: <http://carmen.osu.edu>.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

### **Wednesday, January 3 *Introduction***

Introduction to the course, in-class writing exercise.

### **Monday, January 8 *Introduction to Ethnographic Writing***

Introduction to Writing Project 1

Sign up for Group Presentations

READ: *FieldWorking* 1-24 & "What is Folklore?":

<http://www.afsnet.org/aboutfolklore/aboutFL.cfm> (link on Carmen)

### **Wednesday, January 10 *Reading Self, Reading Cultures***

Strategies for Writing Project 1

READ: *FieldWorking* 117-128, 130-132, 143-156

Assignment: Complete the writing exercise in "Box 9" on 125-127; bring this in written or typed form to class

### **Monday, January 15 *Martin Luther King, Jr. Day***

**NO CLASS**

### **Wednesday, January 17 *Researching People***

DRAFT of Writing Project 1 due in class; Bring two copies

Peer work on drafts

READ: *FieldWorking* 280-298

**Monday, January 22 *Writing Ethnography, Yesterday and Today***

Introduction to Writing Projects 2 & 3

READ: *FieldWorking* 25-44, 460-462 & Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, Chapters 1-3

Assignment: Respond to Mead on Carmen

Group Presentation #1

Strategies for revision

**Wednesday, January 24 *Fieldwriting***

READ: *FieldWorking* Chapter 2 (65-85, 91-115)

**Monday, January 29**

Writing Project 1 due in class

READ: *FieldWorking* 169-173, 471-479 & Steven J. Zeitlin, "An Alchemy of Mind": The Family Courtship Story **\*\*NOTE:** This article is available on Carmen and not in your course pack.

Assignment: Respond to Zeitlin on Carmen

Group Presentation #2

Library research methods and citation formats

**Wednesday, January 31 *Researching Place***

READ: *FieldWorking* 175-205 & Leslie Prosterman, Chapter 1 of *Ordinary Life, Festival Days*

Assignment: Respond to Prosterman on Carmen

Group Presentation #3

**Monday, February 5 *Colonized Spaces***

READ: *FieldWorking* 209-220 & Erika Brady. "The River's Like Our Back Yard": Tourism and Cultural Identity in the Ozark National Scenic Riverways

Assignment: Respond to Brady on Carmen

Group Presentation #4

**Wednesday, February 7 *Ethnographic Film***

DRAFT of Writing Project 2 due in class; Bring two copies

Peer work on drafts

READ: Nancy Kalow, *Living Dolls*

Assignment: Respond to Kalow on Carmen

Group Presentation #5

**Monday, February 12 *Interviewing Skills***

READ: *FieldWorking* 237-269 & Gary E.A. Saum, *Roadside Memorials: Material Focus of Love, Devotion, and Remembrance*

Assignment: Respond to Saum on Carmen

Group Presentation #6

**Wednesday, February 14**

***Reflexive and Responsible Writing***

READ: *FieldWorking* 130-143 & Carol Silverman, Who's Gypsy Here? Reflections at a *Rom* Burial & A Statement of Ethics for the American Folklore Society:

<http://www.afsnet.org/aboutAFS/ethics.cfm>

Assignment: Respond to Silverman on Carmen

Group Presentation #7

**Monday, February 19 *Researching Language***

Final Writing Project 2 due in class

READ: *FieldWorking* 307-341

**Wednesday, February 21 *Verbal Performance***

READ: *FieldWorking* 315-341 & Karen Baldwin, "'Woof!' A Word on Women's Roles in Family Storytelling

Assignment: Respond to Baldwin on Carmen

Group Presentation #8

**Monday, February 26 *Drafting Your Drafts***

READ: *FieldWorking* 419-431 & Jay Mechling, Day 3: Tuesday

Assignment: Respond to Mechling on Carmen

Group Presentation #9

**Wednesday, February 28 *Thickening Your Draft***

DRAFT of Writing Project 3 due in class; Bring multiple copies

Peer work on drafts

READ: *FieldWorking* 432-446

**Monday, March 5 *Crafting Your Text***

READ: *FieldWorking* 447-457

**Wednesday, March 7 *Revising and Finalizing Your Project***

Second DRAFT of Writing Project 3 due in class; Bring multiple copies

Peer work on drafts

READ: *FieldWorking* 462-470, 460-470