

EUROPEAN ORAL LITERATURE

MGRK 209, GMST 382, LITR 195

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines oral literature from various European traditions. Specific focus will be placed on Greek material, but a comparative study of sources from other countries (German, French, English, and south Slavic) will be taken in consideration too. Among the large variety of oral genres we will concentrate on folktales, myths, and legends (oral prose) and folksongs, ballads, and epic (oral poetry). We will discuss the following issues: the concept of the genre, the academic definitions and classifications of genres; problems of tradition, history and continuity; gender-related distinctions; performance and audience; nationalist appropriations of oral forms; orality versus literacy. Texts will be available in English though students are encouraged to read available material in the original language.

All primary and secondary sources are in a reading packet available at the Hellenic Studies Program.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Attendance and participation:	15%
Oral presentation:	15%
Two response papers (2 pages each):	20%
Mid term paper (4-6 pages):	20%
Final paper (10-12 pages):	30%

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction. Classification of Oral Genres

Roderick Beaton, "The Oral Traditions of Modern Greece," pp. 110-133.

Dan Ben-Amos, "Analytical Categories and Ethnic Genres," (In *Folklore Genres*), pp. 215-242.

Further recommended reading

Dan Ben-Amos, "Introduction." (In *Folklore Genres*), pp. ix-xlv.

Week 2: Folktale I. What is a Folktale?

Primary Sources

Georgios Megas (ed.): *Folktales of Greece*, pp. 11-13, 37-42, 42-46, 70-74, 93-99, 123-127, 143-144, 171-172, 187-189, 191-192.

Secondary Sources

Max Lüthi, *The European Folktale*: 4-80.

Week 3: Folktale II. Oral Folktales or Literary Fairy Tales?

Primary Sources

Maria Tatar, "Six Fairy Tales form the Nursery and Household Tales with Commentary", (In *Hard Facts of the Grimm's Fairy Tales*), pp. 195-241.

Secondary Sources

Heinz Rölleke, "New Results of Research on Grimm's Fairy Tales", pp. 101-111.

Jack Zipes, "Dreams of a Better Bourgeois Life: The Psychosocial Origins of the Grimm's Tales," pp. 205-219.

Further recommended reading

Charles Briggs, "Metadiscursive Practices and Scholarly Authority in Folkloristics," pp. 387-434.

Week 4: Folktale III. Folktale and Gender

Primary Sources

Maria Tatar, "Beauty and the Beast", (In *The Classic Fairy Tales*), pp. 25-32, 42-50, 66-73.

Secondary Sources

Karen Rowe, "To Spin a Yarn: The Female Voice in Folklore and Fairy Tale," pp. 297-308.

Marina Warner, "The Old Wives' Tale," pp. 309-317.

Further recommended reading

Jack Zipes, *Don't Bet on the Prince*, pp. 1-36.

First response paper due

Week 5: Myth I. Myth and History

Primary Sources

Nancy Hathaway, *The Friendly Guide to Mythology*, pp. 135-264 (selections).

Secondary Sources

Margaret Alexiou, "The Diversity of Mythical Genres", pp. 151-171.

Marcel Detienne, *The Creation of Mythology*, pp. 42-62.

Further recommended reading

Marcel Detienne, *The Creation of Mythology*, pp. 103-123.

Jaen Puhvel, *Comparative Mythology*, pp. 1-42, 126-143.

Week 6: Myth II. Personal Myths: The Hero

Primary Sources

Nancy Hathaway, *The Friendly Guide to Mythology*, pp. 284-315.

Secondary Sources

Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (selections).

Further recommended reading

Robert Segal, "Introduction: In Quest of the Hero," pp. vii-xli.

Week 7: Legends: True or not?

Primary Sources

Lucy Garnett, "Historical Folk-Legends", pp. 413-436.

Secondary Sources

Jan Harold Brunvand, "Legends and Anecdotes", (In *The Study of American Folklore*), pp. 196-228.

Further recommended reading

Linda Dégh, "Is There a Definition for the Legend?", (In *Legend and Belief*), pp. 23-97.

Mid term paper due

Week 8: Folksong

Primary Sources

Philip Argenti and H.J. Rose, "Folk-Songs," (In *The Folk-Lore of Chios*), pp. 633-713.

Secondary Sources

Jan Harold Brunvand, "Folksongs," (In *The Study of American Folklore*), pp. 269-302.

Further recommended reading

Roderick Beaton, *Folk Poetry of modern Greece*, pp. 58-73, 90-111, 136-150.

Week 9: Ballad: Nationalist Appropriations

Primary Sources

Sophie Jewett, *Folk-Ballads of Southern Europe*, pp. 258-267.

Vuk Karadžić, "The Building of Skadar", (In *The Walled-Up Wife*, Alan Dundes ed.) pp. 3-12.

Secondary Sources

Jan Harold Brunvand, "Ballads," (In *The Study of American Folklore*), pp. 303-344.

Roderick Beaton, "The Greek Ballad 'The Bridge of Arta' as Myth," pp. 63-70.

Further recommended reading

Roderick Beaton, "Modern Greek and South Slav Oral Tradition," pp. 151-164.

Brewster, Paul, "The Foundation Sacrifice Motif in Legend, Folksong, Game, and Dance", pp. 35-62.

Week 10: Oral Epic: Composition and Performance

Primary Sources

Milman Parry and Albert Lord, *Serbocroatian Heroic Songs*, Volume I, English Translations, pp. 68-89, 119-121, 155-160, 169-178.

Secondary Sources

Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, pp. 3-29.

John Miles Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance*, pp. 1-28.

Further recommended reading

David Bynum, "The Generic Nature of Oral Epic Poetry," pp. 35-58.

Second response paper due

Week 11: "Rembetiko" (Greek Blues) as a Genre

Lecture by Professor Gail Holst-Warhaft on urban Greek music Rembetiko.

Secondary Sources

Harry Oster, "The Blues as a Genre," pp. 59-75.

Week 12: The "Dialogue" between Oral and Written Literature

Primary Sources

Selected texts with folktales, myths, legends, folksongs, and ballads.

Secondary Sources

Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, pp. 78-116.

Further recommended reading

Susan Stewart, "Notes on Distressed Genres," pp. 5-31.

Week 13: Questions of Genre

John Miles Foley, "The Impossibility of Canon," pp. 13-33.

Paul Zumthor, "Forms and Genres," pp. 59-78.

Final paper due

READINGS

Primary Sources

The full references to the books from which these texts have been extracted are given below for those who wish to read further:

Argenti, Philip and H.J. Rose 1949: *The Folk-Lore of Chios*. Two Volumes. Cambridge: University Press.

Garnett, Lucy M.J. 1896: *Greek Folk Poesy: Annotated Translations, from the Whole Cycle of Romaic Folk-Verse and Folk-Prose*. Guildford: Billing and Sons.

Hathaway, Nancy 2001: *The Friendly Guide to Mythology. A Mortal's Companion to the Fantastical Realm of Gods, Goddesses, Monsters, and Heroes*. New York: Viking.

Jewett, Sophie 1913: *Folk-Ballads of Southern Europe*. Translated into English Verse. New York and London: G.P. Putnam.

- Dundes, Alan (ed.) 1996: *The Walled-up Wife. A Casebook*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Megas, Georgios (ed.) 1970: *Folktales of Greece*. Translated by Helen Colaclides. Foreword by Richard Dorson. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Parry, Milman and Albert Lord 1954: *Serbocroatian Heroic Songs*, Volume I, Novi Pazar: English Translations, Cambridge and Belgrade: Harvard University Press.
- Tatar, Maria (ed.) 1999: *The Classic Fairy Tales: Texts, Criticism*. New York: Norton.
- Tatar, Maria 2003: *Hard Facts of the Grimm's Fairy Tales*. Expanded Second Edition. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Secondary Sources

Recommended purchases are marked with an asterisk:

- Alexiou, Margaret 2002: "The Diversity of Mythical Genres." *After Antiquity. Greek Language, Myth, and Metaphor*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, pp. 151-171.
- * Beaton, Roderick 1980: *Folk Poetry of Modern Greece*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 58-73, 90-111, 136-150.
- Beaton, Roderick 1986: "The Oral Traditions of Modern Greece. A Survey." *Oral Tradition* 1(1): 110-133.
- Beaton, Roderick 1994: "Modern Greek and South Slav Oral Tradition: Specific Contrasts and Theoretical Implications." *The Uses of Tradition. A Comparative Enquiry into the Nature, Uses and Functions of Oral Poetry in the Balkans, the Baltic, and Africa*. Michael Branch and Celia Hawkesworth (ed). London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, pp. 151-164.
- Beaton, Roderick 1996: "The Greek Ballad 'The Bridge of Arta' as Myth." *The Walled-up Wife. A Casebook*. Alan Dundes (ed). Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 63-70.
- Ben-Amos, Dan 1976: "Analytical Categories and Ethnic Genres." *Folklore Genres*. Dan Ben-Amos (ed.). Austin: University of Texas Press, pp. 215-242.
- Ben-Amos, Dan 1976: "Introduction." *Folklore Genres*. Dan Ben-Amos (ed). Austin: University of Texas Press, pp. ix-xlv.
- Brewster, Paul 1996: "The Foundation Sacrifice Motif in Legend, Folksong, Game, and Dance", *The Walled-up Wife. A Casebook*. Alan Dundes (ed). Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 35-62.
- Briggs, Charles 1993: "Metadiscursive Practices and Scholarly Authority in Folkloristics." *Journal of American Folklore* 106(422): 387-434.
- Brunvand, Jan Harold 1998: *The Study of American Folklore. An Introduction*. Fourth Edition. New York, London: Norton, pp. 196-228, 269-302, 303-344.
- Bynum, David 1976: "The Generic Nature of Oral Epic Poetry." *Folklore Genres*. Dan Ben-Amos (ed). Austin: University of Texas Press, pp. 35-58.
- Campbell, Joseph 2004 [1949]: *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Commemorative Edition with an Introduction by Clarissa Pinkola Estés. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- * Dégh, Linda 2001: *Legend and Belief. Dialectics of a Folklore Genre*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 23-97.
- Detienne, Marcel 1986: *The Creation of Mythology*. Chicago: University of Chicago, pp. 42-62, 103-123.

- Foley, John Miles 1995: *The Singer of Tales in Performance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 1-28.
- Foley, John Miles 1998: "The Impossibility of Canon." *Teaching Oral Traditions*. John Miles Foley (ed.). New York: MLA, pp. 13-33.
- Lord, Albert 2000 [1960]: *The Singer of Tales*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, pp. 3-138.
- * Lüthi, Max 1982: *The European Folktale: Form and Nature*. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues.
- * Ong, Walter 1982: *Orality and Literacy. The Technologizing of the Word*. London, New York: Routledge, pp. 78-116.
- Oster, Harry 1976: "The Blues as a Genre," *Folklore Genres*. Dan Ben-Amos (ed). Austin: University of Texas Press, pp. 59-75.
- Puhvel, Jaan 1987: *Comparative Mythology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 1-42, 126-143.
- Rölleke, Heinz 1988: "New Results of Research on Grimm's Fairy Tales," *The Brothers Grimm and Folktale*. McGlathery, James M.(ed). Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, pp. 101-111.
- Rowe, Karen 1999: "To Spin a Yarn: The Female Voice in Folklore and Fairy Tale." *The Classic Fairy Tales: Texts, Criticism*. Maria Tatar (ed.). New York: Norton, pp. 297-308.
- Segal, Robert 1990: "Introduction: In Quest of the Hero," *In Quest of the Hero*. Otto Rank, Lord Raglan, Alan Dundes. With an Introduction by Robert Segal. Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, pp. vii-xli.
- Stewart, Susan 1991: "Notes on Distressed Genres." *Journal of American Folklore* 104 (411): 5-31.
- * Tatar, Maria (ed.)1999: *The Classic Fairy Tales: Texts, Criticism*. New York: Norton.
- Warner, Marina 1999: "The Old Wives' Tale." *The Classic Fairy Tales: Texts, Criticism*. Maria Tatar (ed.). New York: Norton, pp. 309-317.
- Zipes, Jack 1986: *Don't Bet on the Prince: Contemporary Feminist Fairy Tales in North America and England*. New York: Methuen, pp.1-36.
- Zipes, Jack 1988: "Dreams of a Better Bourgeois Life: The Psychosocial Origins of the Grimm's Tales." *The Brothers Grimm and Folktale*. McGlathery, James M.(ed). Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, pp. 205-219.
- Zumthor, Paul 1990: "Forms and Genres." *Oral Poetry: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 59-78.