



Course name:	Appalachian Culture	
Department, course #, level:	English 220, undergraduate	
Semester(s) and year(s) taught (without significant variation):	Spring 2000	
Institution:	Shepherd College	
Instructor(s):	Linda Tate	Rachael Meads

ENGL 220, Appalachian Culture

Spring 2000, Mondays 6:00 to 8:40 p.m.

Dr. Linda Tate, Knutti 210, x. 5365, ltate@shepherd.wvnet.edu, Office Hours: 3:30-5:00
Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:00-12:30 Tuesdays and Thursdays

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rmeads@shepherd.wvnet.edu

Course Website: <http://webpages.shepherd.edu/ltate/appculture.htm>

Festival Website: <http://www.shepherd.wvnet.edu/passweb/festival.htm>

Required Texts and Materials

Awiakta, Marilou. Selu: Seeking the Corn Mother's Wisdom.

Arnow, Harriette Simpson. The Dollmaker.

Giardina, Denise. Storming Heaven.

Giardina, Denise. The Unquiet Earth.

McCrum, Sharyn. The Rosewood Casket.

McNeill, Louise. Gauley Mountain.

Smith, Lee. Oral History.

Reserve materials in Scarborough Library.

Two 90-minute audiotapes for recording listening materials. It is recommended that you purchase tapes marked: IEC II/ Type II High Position.

Approximate cost of field trip (April 13-16): We hope to keep the cost down to around \$50 per person (including meals and lodging). If you wish to have a more private room (less than 4 people per room), you need to let us know that AS SOON AS POSSIBLE so that we may make reservations now. The cost of the field trip will go up depending on the degree of privacy you desire. Money for the field trip will be due by March 6.

Access to the Internet.

Appalachian Culture will introduce students to a wide variety of creative expression from those states which constitute southern Appalachia, particularly West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Kentucky. Students will study cultural stereotypes about Appalachia, unique historical and cultural forces at work in Appalachia, and the rich expression of creativity in Appalachia (including oral and written literatures, visual arts and crafts, and singing and songwriting). During the mandatory four-day field trip in April, students will have the chance to see and meet Appalachian artists and performers.

Course requirements include: reading, listening, and viewing of assigned materials; participation in the April field trip; active participation in class; participation in web-based discussion group; two 750- to 1000-word essays, one on an assigned musical topic, the other on a novel of the student's choice; 2000- to 2500-word essay/interview transcription based on a major research project of the student's choosing; and five class presentations (one on music, one on literature, one on Goldenseal, one on the Foxfire series, and one on the student's major project). The major project will be either a transcribed interview with a musician, writer, or dancer who will be performing at the fall festival OR an article on some subject related to the festival (e.g., traditional instruments, Appalachian children's books, crafts/quilts, women's contributions to Appalachian music, African American contributions to Appalachian culture, Cherokee contributions to Appalachian culture, the folk revival movement, outsiders' views of Appalachia, etc.). For either type of project, students will need to conduct both primary and secondary research, and the goal will be to have finished products that would be suitable for publication in The Front Porch News (the festival magazine) or for a magazine such as Goldenseal or for audio or video broadcast on radio or television.

This is very much a student-centered course, and as much as possible, we will share with students the joy and responsibility of building knowledge together. Student contributions will be reflected often in the class through the web-based discussion group, student presentations, class discussion, and more generally through acknowledgment that each student is developing expertise in some area of Appalachian culture. Therefore, citizenship through participation and regular attendance will be essential to the success of the course.

Final course grade will be determined as follows: each of the 750- to 1000-word essays is worth 15% (for a total of 30%, grade includes oral presentation as well as written essay); contribution to web-based discussion is worth 15%; in-class presentations are worth a total of 10%; the major project (prospectus/query letter, written project, and class presentation) is worth 30%; and citizenship (class participation, regular attendance, completion of assignments, involvement in field trip, etc.) is worth 15%. You will be allowed no more than one-and-one-half absences for any reason. Missing more than one-and-one-half classes makes you ineligible to receive any points for citizenship. Arriving for class more than ten minutes late is the equivalent of a one-half absence.

We strongly encourage you to visit the Writing Center as you develop your essays for this course. Working with a tutor in the Writing Center is most helpful when you develop an ongoing relationship with one tutor, when you schedule your appointments in advance, and

when you meet two to three times as you develop a particular essay. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR ANY REASON, AND EXTENSIONS WILL NOT BE GIVEN.

Finally, please note that all work in the course should be your own fresh work for this course. Plagiarism or academic dishonesty of any kind will result in automatic failure of the course. In no case should you borrow work from another student or from a published source.

EACH WEEK, THERE WILL BE A FEATURED POET. THAT INFORMATION WILL BE POSTED ON THE WEBSITE AND SHARED IN CLASS. THIS DOES NOT REQUIRE EXTRA OUTSIDE WORK ON THE PART OF THE STUDENTS.

January 24

Introduction of class participants
Discuss stereotypes of Appalachia
Screen Strangers and Kin
Assign music reports and essays
Assign novel reports and essays

January 31

Before class, read Lee Smith, Oral History
Student reports and essays due on Oral History
Screen Fixin' to Tell about Jack
Tutor visit

February 7

Before class, read excerpts from Jean Ritchie, Singing Family of the Cumberlands (reserve)
Listen to both sides of Tape 1 (traditional music)
Student reports and essays on The Hammons Family, Melvin Wine, Jean Ritchie, Doc Watson, and Ginny Hawker

February 14

Listen to both sides of Tape 2 (commercial music)
Student reports and essays on The Carter Family, Bill Monroe, The Stanley Brothers, Hazel Dickens, Cephas and Wiggins
Assign Goldenseal reports for February 28

February 21

Before class, read Sharyn McCrumb, The Rosewood Casket
Student reports and essays due on The Rosewood Casket
Assign Foxfire reports for March 6

February 28

Before class, read Myles Horton, "Building Democracy in the Mountains" (reserve) and excerpt from Myles Horton and Paulo Freire, We Make the Road by Walking: Education and Social Change (reserve)

Screen Bill Moyers interview with Myles Horton
Student reports on Goldenseal
Brainstorm possibilities for major projects
Mentor assignments

March 6

Query letter due
Student reports on Foxfire
Before class, read excerpts from Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Colored People (reserve)
Student reports and essays due on Colored People
FIELD TRIP MONEY DUE

March 13

Revised query letter due
Screen Harlan County, U.S.A.
Guest speakers: Ed Snyder and Peter Vila, Shepherd College Institute of Environmental Studies

March 20

SPRING BREAK--ENJOY!
Appalachian Studies Association Conference, Knoxville, TN, March 24-26

March 27

Before class, read Marilou Awiakta, Selu
Student reports and essays due on Selu

April 3

Before class, read Mildred Haun, "The Hawk's Done Gone" (reserve)
Slide presentation by Professor Meads
Screen West Virginia Quilt Project

April 10

Before class, read Harriette Arnow, The Dollmaker
Student reports and essays due on The Dollmaker

MANDATORY FIELD TRIP: April 13-16

The field trip will take us into the heart of West Virginia, where we will spend four days, three nights exploring the music, literature, and culture of West Virginia. Poet and fiddler Doug Van Gundy will be our guide throughout the weekend. We will be staying in Flatwoods, West Virginia, at the Laurel Court Motel. We'll be visiting old-time musicians in their homes, having a pizza-and-poetry night with Doug Van Gundy and Sherrell Wigal, and attending Melvin Wine's 91st birthday party concert. Virtually all of the traditional Appalachian musicians perform in this tribute concert. On Friday and Saturday nights, musicians will be arriving from all over the region, and jam sessions will spring up throughout the motel. We'll have a great time, and you will get a unique opportunity to meet and interact with many outstanding musicians.

April 17

Before class, read Louise McNeill, Gauley Mountain

Student reports and essays due on Gauley Mountain

Guest speaker: Shannon Holliday

Screen Dreadful Memories

April 24

Before class, read Denise Giardina, Storming Heaven

Student reports and essays due on Storming Heaven

Before class, watch Matewan (portions will be screened in class)

May 1

Before class, read Denise Giardina, The Unquiet Earth

Student reports and essays due on The Unquiet Earth

Screen The Buffalo Creek Flood

Read on website:

?James Still, "Heritage"

?Richard Hague, "In the Woods beyond the Coalfields"

?Rita Quillen, "The Good Life"

May 8

Project presentation

Course evaluation

Read (handout): Bobbie Ann Mason, "Nancy Culpeper"

Guidelines for Web Discussion

You are required to log on to our discussion group a minimum of two times per week. You must log on with a response to the current week's assigned reading and/or listening no later than Sunday at 9 p.m. You must log on at least one other time throughout the week, posting a response to anything course-related issue you wish. Your entries do not need to be formal and do not need to be carefully edited or structured. They will not be evaluated on mechanics. Though they can be free thought in structure and approach, they should engage thoughtfully and substantially with the issues at hand. Your Sunday postings should make clear that you have completed the assigned reading and/or listening and considered it carefully.

We prefer not to set specific lengths for these postings, and we will let you know individually if there are any problems with the length, frequency, or content of your postings. Otherwise, if you post two times a week, you can assume that you are earning an "A" for this portion of the course. You are certainly welcome to post more frequently, but you will not earn extra credit for doing so.

Linda and Rachael will read the postings at least once a day and will also join in the discussion frequently. Most weeks, we will post questions for possible consideration.

Major Project

Each student will complete a major project, determined in consultation with Linda and Rachael. The project should link to the 2000 Appalachian Heritage Festival in some way. It may focus on one of the artists to be featured at the festival, on one of the art forms to be featured, or provide some kind of background information to one of these artists or art forms. The final project may be an audio interview and interview transcript; a broadcast-quality video or radio clip (suitable for a five-minute broadcast); a feature article; or a creative nonfiction essay. This is not a thesis-driven project. Your project should have a clear focus and a unifying idea, but we do not wish to see traditional academic essays.

We will explore possible project topics together at our February 28 class meeting. That evening, you will look at the previous edition of The Front Porch News, the festival magazine written by last year's Appalachian Culture students; examine interviews and articles published in Goldenseal magazine; and hear radio pieces about the festival that have been prepared by West Virginia Public Radio's Cecelia Mason in past years. Throughout the semester, you will see a variety of documentary videos produced by Appalshop. These materials will give you helpful models in developing your own projects.

As you begin to develop your proposal and later your project, you will meet individually on a regular basis with either Linda or Rachael.

On March 6, you will submit a "query letter" that makes a case for the project you wish to undertake. You should make clear how your project will relate to the 2000 festival, how your project might be utilized in the festival, how you plan to execute the project, and how you envision the final product, and if you hope to continue with a practicum next fall, how the project might be expanded for use in the festival. Linda and Rachael will consider the query letters carefully and will work with you individually until we have arrived at a mutually satisfactory plan. Your query letter (with revisions if necessary) will serve as our contract of what each student is to accomplish for his/her project.

Festival artists for 2000 are: Kay Justice and Ginny Hawker (performing Carter Family songs), The Herald Angel Band (Kay Justice and Alice Gerrard), Carol Elizabeth Jones and James Leva (performing the music of the Stanley Brothers), Wade and Julia Mainer, Mike Seeger, and Marilou Awiakta.

Music Report and Essay

You will work with one other student to prepare an oral report on one of the following performers: The Hammons Family, Melvin Wine, The Carter Family, Jean Ritchie, The Coon Creek Girls, Bill Monroe, The Stanley Brothers, Doc Watson, Hazel Dickens, Ginny Hawker. Reports will be made on February 7 and February 14 as scheduled on the syllabus. Each pair will have 10 to 15 minutes to make the presentation. In addition, each student will write a 750- to 1000-word MLA-documented essay about the assigned performer. This means that each pair will be submitting two essays, one by each student, but will make a joint presentation. You may work together to find research materials, to listen to music, to explore this particular music, but each of you should write your own essay. Unlike the major project, the music essay should be in the format of a traditional academic essay, and therefore it should have a thesis statement as well as a carefully organized structure.

Your oral report and essay should do the following:

- introduce your reader and listener to the particular artist;
- briefly survey the history of the artist's music, including recording history if applicable;
- describe the "genre" and time period the artist's music reflects;
- discuss the importance and significance of the artist.

In addition, your oral report should include at least one song by the artist NOT included on the class listening tapes.

You may borrow from us a number of resource books, tapes, and C.D.s, and we will distribute an annotated list of these materials.

You are also **STRONGLY** encouraged to meet with Rachael or Linda to discuss this project. You may chat with us on-line of course, but you will find it even more helpful to visit us in our offices. Rachael is the primary resource person for music reports and essay, but please let either of us know if you are having difficulty finding information about the artists or if you are unsure of the format for the oral presentation or the essay.

Literature Essay

Each student will work with another student or two to research one of the books being studied in class. On the night that the student's assigned novel is to be discussed in class, the student--and his partner(s)--will provide a 10- to 15-minute oral presentation about the novel. The student will also submit that night a 750- to 1000-word essay on that book.

Your oral report and essay should do the following:

- introduce your reader and listener to the particular writer;
- briefly survey the history of the writer's work;
- discuss the importance and significance of the writer.

Unlike your music essay and your oral report about the novelist, your literature essay will NOT be a research paper. Instead, your essay should provide your thoughtful analysis of the book and should be presented in the form of a traditional academic essay (with introduction, thesis, body paragraphs supporting the thesis, and a conclusion). You may include secondary sources if you wish, but you are not required to do so. Primarily, this essay should be YOUR analysis and consideration of this book.

You are free to develop your own focus and thesis for the essay, but it should be suitable for an essay of this length. It should be specific and narrow in its focus, it should be substantive and interesting, and it should teach the reader something new and fresh about the book in question. You are **STRONGLY** encouraged to consult with Rachael and Linda as you develop your essay, and you may also find it helpful to chat on-line with each other about

possible topics and approaches. Although either of us can answer questions about this project, Linda will be the primary resource person for literary reports and essays.

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