

HI2G2-15 From Fireplace to Cyberspace: The Folklore of the British Isles from Prehistory to the Present

20/21

Department

History

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Jonathan Davies

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

“Folklore expresses fundamental human needs, desires, and anxieties which are often not revealed through other means” (Simon J. Bronner). It allows people to create traditions, share knowledge, and give meaning to everyday life. The folklore of the British Isles has always been in a constant process of regeneration. The old and the new, the oral, the textual, and the visual have mixed and mingled. Folklore has moved from the countryside to towns and cities and now to the Internet as digital communication encourages new forms of vernacular expression. The module focuses on folklore beliefs, practices, and representations from prehistory to the present. Topics include the ritual year, birth, marriage, and death, the supernatural, place, work and play, urban legends and cyberlore. The module considers similarities and differences between England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland and it also encourages you to reflect on the broader global framework. The module includes an optional visit to the British Folk Art Collection at Compton Verney.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

The module introduces you to the methodological and theoretical issues involved in researching and writing on folklore. It also exposes you to the opportunities and problems presented by a wide range of evidence. These sources include architecture, ceramics, diaries, fairy stories, folktales, letters, metalware, novels, nursery rhymes, paintings, plays, poetry, sculpture, signage, songs, and textiles. The module draws on insights from neighbouring disciplines including anthropology, archaeology, ethnography, gender studies, history of art and architecture, and literary criticism. The module sets folklore in its cultural, economic, political, religious, and social contexts, relating it to broader historical trends.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

- Week 1: What is Folklore?
- Week 2: Verbal Sources
- Week 3: Material Culture
- Week 4: The Ritual Year
- Week 5: Birth, Marriage, and Death
- Week 6: Reading week
- Week 7: The Supernatural
- Week 8: Place
- Week 9: Work and Play
- Week 10: Urban Legends and Cyberlore

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to contextualise folklore as a subject of historical enquiry.
- Communicate ideas and findings in a comparative context, adapting to a range of situations, audiences and degrees of complexity.
- Generate ideas through the analysis of a broad range of primary source material, including relevant information technology.
- Analyse and evaluate the contributions made by existing interdisciplinary scholarship on folklore.
- Act with limited supervision and direction within defined guidelines, accepting responsibility for achieving deadlines.

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

Subject specific skills

See learning outcomes.

Transferable skills

See learning outcomes.

Study

Study time

Type	Required	Optional
Seminars	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)	
External visits	(0%)	1 session of 4 hours
Private study	132 hours (88%)	
Total	150 hours	

Private study description

History modules require students to undertake extensive independent research and reading to prepare for seminars and assessments. As a rough guide, students will be expected to read and prepare to comment on three substantial texts (articles or book chapters) for each seminar taking approximately 3 hours. Each assessment requires independent research, reading around 6-10 texts and writing and presenting the outcomes of this preparation in an essay, review, presentation or other related task.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A

Weighting**Study time****Eligible for self-certification****Assessment component**

Seminar contribution 10%

No

The contribution of each student to small and large group discussions will be assessed across all seminars. There will be formative mid-module self-evaluation which will be adjusted by the tutor if necessary. This is an opportunity for you to reflect on your seminar contribution so far and consider ways of improving it in the remainder of the module. There will also be summative end of module self-evaluation which will be adjusted by the tutor if necessary. This is an opportunity for you to reflect on your seminar contribution across the whole module.

Reassessment component

Seminar Reflection

You will reflect on how your preparation for and participation in the seminars has increased your knowledge of the study of folklore in the British Isles.

Assessment component

Digital object 40%

Yes (extension)

Either a podcast or a videocast or a blog.

Reassessment component is the same**Assessment component**

Primary source review 50%

Yes (extension)

The aim of the primary source review is to shift your attention to primary sources and allow you to seriously engage with them, in preparation for more extensive research as in your final year dissertation. The key question you are trying to answer with the review: How can we use this source (or these sources) to illuminate the history of folklore? As such you should choose a source first, not a theme, and that source should drive the content of the project. (In this sense, this is different from what you are asked to do in a normal research essay).

Reassessment component is the same**Feedback on assessment**

Written feedback provided via Tabula.

Optional oral feedback in office hours.

Optional 'feed-forward' on an essay plan submitted in advance of the deadline.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
- Year 2 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
- Year 2 of UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
- Year 2 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
- Year 2 of UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology