AMGT 599 & ENGH: 412/591:  
**Folklore & Festival Management**

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Date/Time: Wed @ 4:30pm (Arlington Campus)  
Professors: Dr. Karalee Dawn McKay,  
Dr. Lisa Gilman & Dr. Carole Rosenstein  
Email: kdawn@gmu.edu  
Office hours: By appointment

Spring 2020  
Van Metre Hall, Room 477  
Office hours: By appointment

Course Description

The first of a new two course sequence, *Folklore & Festival Management* is a collaboration between Mason’s Folklore and Arts Management Programs and the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. The spring course offers instruction in the history and methods of folklore and the production of cultural festivals. It is a prerequisite for the summer course that will give students hands-on training while interning with the Smithsonian Folklife Festival 2020.

In this course, students will examine the theories, history, creative and logistical aspects of folklore and cultural heritage festivals while using the Smithsonian Folklife Festival as an immersive case study. We will examine how the SFF is structured, interpreted, and curated, and the management and operational challenges that are encountered. This course will feature guest speakers, tours, and attending working meetings with Smithsonian Folklife Festival 2020 staff.

Topics to be explored include: folklore theories, traditional arts and cultural heritage preservation, curation and interpretation, issues of representation and display, questions of authenticity, Festival ecosystem and purposes, programming and logistics, marketing and community outreach, fundraising and partnership strategies, interpersonal team management skills, training and managing a temporary staff, accessibility issues, risk assessment and security, and day-to-day festival management challenges.

***Please note: there will be several meetings and lectures that will require travel into Washington D.C. to the Smithsonian Center for Folklife & Cultural Heritage offices. Students will be required to make their own transportation arrangements.***

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, students will:

- Apply folklore theories and methods and festival management strategies to analyze successful events in a variety of settings
- Understand the intrinsic and instrumental benefits of festivals and the scholarship that defines and guides these events and the communities they serve
- Develop management strategies for different scenarios and gain insight into logistics, planning, policy and contemporary issues that are involved in creating and managing festivals
- Understand the role of local, state, and federal government organizations that are involved in creating and maintaining traditional arts festivals
- Create management planning tools that respond to specific festival programs
- Develop personal leadership, collaboration, and time-management strategies and skills that is developed through working with an established SFF team on time sensitive projects
- Communicate research findings in a clear, concise and compelling way, both orally and in writing through in class work and projects
- Acquire effective communication and logistic skills and festival engagement best practices through the observation, and hands on work with SFF staff
- Use technology effectively to aid in the planning, organizing and creation of a world class festival experience
Recommended Readings:
- Smithsonian Folklife Festival: Culture Of, By, & for the People by Richard Kurin
- Articles as assigned. Note: All readings are available through the library data search engine or will be a PDF file and/or online links under Course Content on our class Blackboard page.

DRAFT COURSE SCHEDULE

(Subject to Change)

All readings will be discussed on the day they are listed.

Please note that all students are expected to have completed ALL assigned readings prior to the designated class session. Please come to class ready to be a full participate in our discussions. Student participation in class discussions will be a major portion of your final grade.

PART I: Folklore & Festivals

Week 1: Jan 22 - What is Folklore?
Introductions: What is your story?
Introduction to the course & explore syllabus and assignments
What is Folklore?

Readings due today:
- “What is Folklore?” Definitions on the website of the American Folklife Society: https://www.afsnet.org/page/WhatIsFolklore

Week 2: Jan 29 – What is Folklore / What is a Folklife Festival
- Festival Ecosystems & Purposes
- Festival Infrastructure Organizations (Public, Nonprofit, Commercial)
- Different Categories of Festival

Readings:
What is Public Folklore?

What is the Smithsonian Folklife Festival?
Learn about the festival:
- Read the mission statement of the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage: https://folklife.si.edu/mission-and-history
- Peruse the website: https://folklife.si.edu
- Peruse the section of the website about the festival: https://festival.si.edu
Readings:


**Week 3: Feb 5 – Issues of Cultural Representations, Part I**  
(CLASS WILL MEET AT THE SCFCH OFFICES @ 5pm)  
Address: Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Capital Gallery Building, 600 Maryland Avenue SW, Suite 2001  
Washington, D.C. 20024

**Guest Speaker:** James Deutsch, Curator & Editor at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife & Cultural Heritage

Cultural Representations and Performance  
Intangible & Tangible Culture  
Material Culture

Readings:

- Cadaval: Imagining a Collaborative Curatorial Relationship: A Reordering of Authority over Representation. *Curatorial Conversations: Cultural Representation and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival*
- Hunt, Majorie: The Poetics and Power of Presentation at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival

*Week 4: Feb 12 @ 5PM - Issues of Cultural Representations, Part II* (FAIRFAX CAMPUS)  
*NOTE: WE WILL MEET AT 5PM ON THE FAIRFAX CAMPUS SO THAT YOU MAY ATTEND THE ARTS IN THE REAL-WORLD INTERNSHIP FAIR AT THE CENTER FOR THE ARTS LOBBY FROM 2-6PM / Room Location TBA

Community Relationships  
Creative Placemaking  
Intellectual Property  
Ethics

Readings:

- Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett’s chapter “Confusing Pleasures” from *Destination Culture* (PDF)
Week 5: Feb 19 - Class Presentations - Review of Public Folklore Programs

Week 6: Feb 26 - Festival Management Overview

Smithsonian Folklife Festival (SFF)

- Mission and Strategic Planning
- Program Features
- Review of Past SFF Programming
- SFF 2020
- What is the SFF?
  - What is “happening” at the festival?
  - What are the multiple layers of social engagement?

Readings:

Please review:

- Read the mission statement of the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage: https://folklife.si.edu/mission-and-history
- SFF website: https://folklife.si.edu
- Review the section of the website about the festival: https://festival.si.edu
- 50 Years / 50 Objects: https://festival.si.edu/50objects

Week 7: March 4 - SCFCH Guest Lecture (Location TBD)

Festival Programming & Research

- Curating & Researching Artists & Material for the SFF
- Artist Management & Services
  - Visas & Organizing Travel Logistics

Project Management Challenges

Large & Small Project Management
Itinerary & Project Calendar Creation & Management

Readings / Handouts to be assigned

Week 8: March 11 - SPRING BREAK

NO CLASS
**Week 9: March 18**

*Festival Management Operations, Strategies & Logistics*
- HR & Volunteer Staffing & Management
  - Training & Managing a Temporary Staff
- Parks Service Relationships
- Community Engagement
- City Planning & Permits
- Vendor Management
- Risk Assessment

*Readings to be assigned*

**Week 10: March 25 - SCFCH Guest Lecture (Location TBD)**

*Festival Financials*
- Fundraising
- Partnerships
- Sponsorships

*Readings to be assigned*

**Week 11: April 1**

NO CLASS – All Students Must Attend a Scheduled Meeting at the SFF Offices this Week (Production, Marketing, Artist Services, Scheduling, etc.)

**Week 12: April 8 - SCFCH Guest Lecture (Location TBD)**

*Festival Marketing & Promotions*

*Digital Marketing & Promotion and the Importance of Documentary Film Making and Production*
- The Tool to Bring People to the Festival and Extend the SFF afterlife
- How Video Material Feeds the SFF Immediate Needs and Creates Material that can be Utilized after the Festival is Completed Allowing the Event to Continue to Live On (Stonecarvers example)
- Digital Streaming Content / YouTube Channel Content
- How Digital Material is Funded, Produced and Disseminated

*Readings to be assigned*

**Week 13: April 15**

**Final Project Presentations**

**Week 14: April 22**

**Final Project Presentations**
Week 15: April 29

**Final Project Presentations**

Professional Job Opportunities in the Field

**Due in class: Cover Letter for a Job Position in the Field**

Class Wrap Up

*Please note: This schedule is subject to change.*

**Assignments**

- **Participation**: Your contribution and participation is essential for a successful class experience. Roll will be taken. Students are expected to have completed the reading prior to each class and contribute to class discussion. Participation points cannot be made up in the event of an absence. Full participation points can be earned by arriving to class on time and not departing early, voluntarily contributing to the weekly discussion, responding to questions directed at the whole class, and accurately responding to questions directly asked. *Class Participation includes any weekly presentations or writings and in-class activities.* To promote full engagement by students during class time, students will not be permitted to use their smartphones; students who engage in activities during class time that are unrelated to class (internet browsing, shoe shopping etc.) will not be able to get full participation points.

- **Guest Lecture Preparation**: Through thorough research and analysis, all students are expected to be fully informed of the bios, and history of all the guest lecturers and organizations that we may visit as part of our course. Students will be graded on the quality of their questions and interactions with the various guest lecturers we will meet through our class.

- **Review of Public Folklore Programs**

- **SFF Meeting Attendance and Report to the Class**

- **Cover Letter for a Job Position in the Field**

*Information Sheets and details on these assignments will be discussed in class prior to the due dates.*

**Evaluation**

*The semester grade is based on a **300-point scale** that breaks down as follows:*

- Attendance and in class participation with thoughtful engagement: 100 points
- Guest Lecture Preparation: 15 Points
- Cover Letter for a Job Position in the Field: 25 Points
- Review of Public Folklore Programs: 35 Points
- **SFF Meeting Attendance & Report to the Class** (25 points for report / 25 points for presentation): 50 Points
- **Final Project** (50 paper / 25 Presentation): 75 Points

**300 Points Total**

**Course Policies**

- Please be on time. Respect others. Be open-minded. Ask questions. Participate.
- You should consider this syllabus as your contract for the course. Late assignments will not be accepted unless in the case of emergency or agreement made with instructor prior to due date of assignment.
- Please email me if you know you will be absent from class. You will receive an unexcused absence if I do not hear from you. Multiple excused and/or unexcused absences will negatively affect your participation grade.
- ALL PAPERS must be double spaced in 12-point font (Times New Roman or Arial Font Only) with one inch margins with name in upper left corner and stapled. Please do not include a cover sheet.
- Cell phones must be turned on silent for the duration of the class period. **Texting will not be permitted.**
- Laptops and tablets are permitted in class and will be required for some in-class activities. Engaging in activities not related to the course (e.g., playing games, Facebooking, Twittering, and emailing) **will not be tolerated.** If you engage in these activities, you will be marked absent for the day. Absolutely no gadgets should be out during guest speakers or classmate presentations.

**University Policies**

**University and Departmental Policies**
Each student is responsible for knowing Mason’s rules, regulations, requirements, and academic policies. This catalog is the normal repository of policy statements but corrections, changes, or interpretations can be promulgated by other means, including electronic publication. When the university or one of its academic units makes changes in course requirements, grading procedures, or the level of qualitative performance expected of its students for acceptance into particular programs, academic standing, or graduation, the changes apply to all students enrolled at the time of implementation of the change and thereafter.

**Academic Integrity**
Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

**Mason Diversity Statement**
George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth. An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected.

**Mason Email Accounts**
Students must use their MasonLIVE email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See [http://masonlive.gmu.edu](http://masonlive.gmu.edu) for more information.

**Office of Disability Services**
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. [http://ods.gmu.edu](http://ods.gmu.edu)

**Writing Center**
A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200; [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu)

**University Libraries**
“Ask a Librarian” [http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html](http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html)

**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**
University Catalog and Policies
The University Catalog, http://catalog.gmu.edu, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

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