

HUM 473 Festivals: Culture in the Making

A COPLAC Distance Mentoring Course

Spring 2016

Dr. Catherine Kroll, Sonoma State University

Dr. Whitney Snow, Midwestern State University

Class Meeting Times (web conference): T Th 2-3:15pm PST; 4-1:15 pm CST; 5-6:15pm EST

You will access to all course materials via the course website:

<https://festivalswordpresscom.wordpress.com>.

Office hours:

Dr. Kroll: W, 2-3, Th 3:45-5:30 PST & by appt. Office phone: (707) 664-2966

kroll@sonoma.edu

Dr. Snow: M W 12-2; T Th 8-11 CST Office phone: (940) 397-8917 whitney.snow@mwsu.edu

Also available via Skype

Participants:

Miranda Limonczenko, Sonoma State University

George (Dale) Ralston, Midwestern State University

Harrison Ratcliffe, St. Mary's College of Maryland

Leanne M. Ray, Midwestern State University

Drew Roberson, Truman State University

Tanya Ruys, Sonoma State University

Alexa Williams, Georgia College

Course Syllabus**Course Description**

Festivals: Culture in the Making is an interdisciplinary course in the humanities centering on local festivals. The study of festivals straddles the fields of public history, oral history, rhetoric, ethnography, American studies, digital humanities, popular culture studies, and anthropology. In this course, students will select a local festival to research over the course of the semester. With the aid of the combined expertise of Dr. Whitney Snow and Dr. Cathy Kroll, students will learn to formulate original research questions, to conduct and digitally record oral interviews and videos, to use ethnographic research methods, to undertake archival research, and to build websites showcasing their research results. Through digital interaction, students will not only be preserving community history, but also providing a platform with which to better share these pieces of the past and present.

Student Learning Objectives

- The creation of digital oral histories, including understanding the ethics of doing oral history; IRB certification of interview projects
- Introduction to the work of major social theorists, anthropologists, and historians
- Introduction to field research and ethnographic methods: close observation, fieldnotes, and analysis
- Introduction to scholarly and archival research
- Practice in deploying digital humanities tools for research and expressive projects, including weekly blogging on the course WordPress site and building a website for the recording and preservation of local history using WordPress
- Development of writing and oral presentation skills
- Collaborative work with a partner or independently; practice in providing constructive feedback on one another's projects

Required Readings

Pdfs and links to most required readings will be posted on the course website:

<https://festivalswordpresscom.wordpress.com>

Important note: You are expected to complete course readings prior to the day they will be discussed and to be prepared with questions and points for discussion.

Course Requirements and Grading

Mini-assignments (35 points total)

- Brief (1-2 hr.) ethnographic observation and write-up (due Week 3)
- prospectus of project, including rationale (due Week 4)
- contract (due Week 6)
- weekly blog postings about work in progress, including final blog post (or paper) of 500 words on project
- discussion leadership on an article chosen from the posted course readings on digital humanities, ethnography, or festivals (scheduled throughout semester)
- completion of course readings
- active participation in class discussions

Major assignment (50 points total)

- a minimum of three interviews or oral histories of individuals associated with the festival, recorded in either audio or video format; submission of interview questions to local campus for IRB approval; transcription of interviews into text format
- library and/or archival research on festival
- website in WordPress showcasing your research on the festival; all sources (including images) cited in MLA format and captions included for all images and other media

Performance on contract (5 points)

Presentation of Final Project to course participants and COPLAC administrators (10 points)

Total Possible Points: 100

Final Grades

Final grades will be determined based on active class participation (including blogging, mini-assignments, and regular presentations to the class) (35%), on performance on the contract (5%) and project (50%), and on the quality of the final formal presentations on the projects (10%). Should your performance be unsatisfactory, your home campus advisor will be notified. Your final grade will be forwarded to your advisor at your home campus and recorded as an independent study course.

Important Course Policies

Policy on Late Work: Assignments are due on the date stated. Any late work will be graded down a half letter grade per day late and will receive minimal feedback; work overdue by one week will not be accepted.

Attendance and Communication: Attendance will be taken at each class meeting and a student's final grade will be lowered for unexcused absences exceeding two. **Important: students with excessive absences will not pass the course.** Should an emergency arise that necessitates your missing class beyond the "free" absences, it is your responsibility to communicate promptly with your two instructors. *Also please note: You are expected to log on and attend class during your Spring Break period if at all possible.*

Academic Ethics:

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at your home institution, requires you to be honest in all of your academic coursework. Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by your home university. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless you are working as a pair on the website-building project.

Class Discussions: Students are expected to attend all classes and to have thoroughly read the assigned material or completed the assigned tasks beforehand. **Prepare for each scheduled class meeting by writing out key points and questions for discussion: tease out the ideas from the readings that are particularly thought-provoking or relevant to your project; make links to previous readings and class discussions; take issue with the authors of the readings as appropriate, etc.**

Blogging: HUM 473 Festivals is a distance mentoring course that connects the nine of us from points all around the country. To bring us closer, we will be “meeting” twice a week via web conferencing, blogging, posting, emailing, phoning, and, occasionally, Skyping. Use your weekly blog posts on your WordPress site to take stock of what you are learning and what challenges may lie ahead of you. These posts are a place for you to brainstorm ideas, to try out your analysis of the festival you are investigating, and to envision the form in which your research conclusions will be displayed on your website. *Also be sure to set aside time each week to read your peers’ blogs: use the “Leave a Reply” function on one another’s blogs to provide feedback and support, as well as to problem-solve.*

Project Contracts: Each student will create a contract with Professors Kroll and Snow describing the intended work for their project. The contracts are due in Week 6: Th, Mar. 3, though each contract will need to be approved by the course instructors and may need to be revised before approval. Each contract must include:

- Mission statement (rationale for and description of project)
- Tools you plan to use
- Schedule of deadlines for presentation of key elements of your project

Note: These contracts may be revised as you work on your project, but you must first consult with your co-instructors.

Regular Presentations (Project Updates): Starting in Week 6, you will be expected to provide weekly status updates in class on Thursdays on your progress. These updates will range from quick check-ins to lengthier updates of 5 to 10 minutes.

End of the Semester (Public) Presentations: During the last week of class, you will make an 8- to 10-minute presentation on your research project. More details about these presentations will follow.

Final Blog Post (or Paper) Reflecting on Project: During the last week of class, you will complete a 500-word blog post (or paper) reflecting on your work over the semester and how well you fulfilled the plans you laid out in your contract. You should reflect both on your process as a digital humanities researcher and on your final project.

Accommodations: If you are a student with a disability, and think you may need academic accommodations, please contact your institution’s Disability Services for Students to obtain a copy of your accommodation letter. Please submit this to your instructors for the course as early as possible in order to avoid a delay in receiving accommodation services.

Schedule of Assignments and Readings

Week 1

T, Jan. 26 Course introduction, including the distance mentoring set-up; student and instructor introductions; OK to share emails? student learning objectives; final project; the basics of WordPress: user accounts, blog posts, pages, menus. What do we mean by “digital humanities”?

Th, Jan. 28 Dr. Snow leads discussion on archival research; Dr. Kroll leads discussion on Geertz, “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight” (pdf posted under Readings on Ethnography on course website). Preview ethnographic observation assignment (assignment posted under Syllabus; due as a blog post Th, Feb. 11); we’ll share our responses to Brown’s *Ghost Dancing on the Cracker Circuit: The Culture of Festivals in the American South* on Tuesday.

Assignments over the weekend:

- Establish your WordPress site with a title and subtitle; customize the look of the site with theme, your profile, menus, and widgets (such as a tag cloud—or save this until you have more content written on your site). Be sure to choose from the list of ADA-accessible WordPress themes; that list is available here: <https://wordpress.org/themes/tags/accessibility-ready/>. (You can easily change your theme at any point later on in the semester, but use an accessible one.)
- Write and publish first blog post about your progress so far (rationale for your likely choice of festival to research; websites on festivals you may have visited; thoughts about your project and the class, etc.).
- Begin thinking about possibilities for your research on a festival
- Plan for your 1-hour ethnographic observation assignment

Week 2

T, Feb. 2 Share your reactions to Brown’s *Ghost Dancing on the Cracker Circuit: The Culture of Festivals in the American South*. Your thoughts on WordPress’s basic functionality and affordances?

Th, Feb. 4 discuss Burdick et al., Chapter 1 of *Digital Humanities* (pdf on course website under Readings in Digital Humanities) and “The Knotted Line” project (link on course website under Readings in DH); **discussion leader _____ (choose an article to present from one of our course reading lists; two days before it’s your turn to lead discussion, send out an email to course participants with author and title of your article).** Assignments for

weekend: complete mini-ethnography assignment; continue archival/library research on your festival; continue research on festivals

Week 3 T, Feb. 9 discuss “Reactions of Racquetball Players to Missed Points,” a student ethnography (posted under Readings on Ethnography) and Roger D. Abrahams, “An American Vocabulary of Celebrations” (posted under Readings on Festivals)

Th, Feb. 11 **DUE: Blog on ethnographic observation assignment**; Discuss Heyl, “Ethnographic Interviewing” (posted under Readings in Ethnography); **discussion leader** _____; recommended reading: Madison, “Introduction to Critical Ethnography” (posted under Readings in Ethnography); over the weekend, view a few student projects from last year’s COPLAC Century America course: <http://course.centuryamerica.org> (click on a Project Contract on right sidebar, then click on the web address for an individual Project Site in the middle of the page in red).

Week 4

T, Feb. 16 Discuss student projects from Century America course; discuss Hale, “Deadly Amusements” (posted under Readings in Festivals); **discussion leader** _____; continue research on possible festivals, weighing pros and cons of each.

Th, Feb. 18 **DUE: 250-word (1 page) prospectus of project, including rationale (as blog entry)**; discuss Emerson, “Fieldnotes in Ethnographic Research” (posted under Readings in Ethnography); briefly present your highlights from your prospectus.

Week 5

T, Feb. 23 Feedback on prospectuses for projects; discuss Robinson, “No Spectators! The Art of Participation, from Burning Man to Boutique Festivals in Britain” and Bungert, “Demonstrating the Values of ‘Gemütlichkeit’ and ‘Cultur’ (both posted under Readings on Festivals)

Th, Feb. 25 Digital skills workshop: mapping and timeline tools: GoogleMaps; Timeline JS3 (<http://timeline.knightlab.com>); TimeToast; Tiki-Toki.

Week 6

T, Mar. 1 Discuss Cummings and Herborn, “Festival Bodies: The Corporeality of the Contemporary Music Festival Scene in Australia” (posted under Readings on Festivals); **discussion leader** _____

Th, Mar. 3 **DUE: Contracts via our course site on Google Docs**. Must include outline of your research plan, sources, and tools to be used, specific milestones/schedule with draft completed by April 21 and final revised version by May 5. Quick check-ins; other topics tba.

Week 7

T, Mar. 8 Discuss _____; **discussion leader** _____

Th Mar. 10 Discuss _____; **discussion leader** _____. Quick check-ins.

Week 8

T, Mar. 15 **Floating Spring Break. Please confirm the dates of your Spring Break with your instructors by email.** We will not be taking a break from weekly meetings, but if you must miss a meeting, you can catch up by watching the meeting at a later date. Discuss _____

Th, Mar. 17 Discuss Emerson et al., “Writing Fieldnotes I: At the Desk, Creating Scenes on a Page” (posted under Readings in Ethnography); **discussion leader** _____. Quick check-ins.

Week 9

T, Mar. 22 Share field notes; discuss Mayer, “Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning” (posted under Readings in Digital Humanities); discuss principles of universal design relevant to website creation; <ALT text> for images; cognitive load; inductive and deductive presentation of content; redundancy; highlighting key ideas; one core task per page, etc.

Th, Mar. 24 Share field notes: discuss _____. Check-ins.

Week 10

T, Mar. 29 Discuss _____; **discussion leader** _____

Th, Mar. 31 Discuss _____; **discussion leader** _____. Quick check-ins.

Week 11

T, Apr. 5 Discuss _____

Th, Apr. 7 Discuss _____; Quick check-ins.

Week 12

T, Apr. 12 Discuss _____

Th, Apr. 14 Quick check-ins: looking toward next Thursday’s due date for project drafts.

Week 13

T, Apr. 19 What questions do you have about completing your project draft for Thursday?
Discuss _____

Th, Apr. 21 **DUE: Polished, edited projects**; present 2-3 highlights of project

Week 14

T, Apr. 26 Feedback/workshop on writing and website design; other topics tba according to students' needs

Th, Apr. 28 Quick check-ins; tba according to students' needs

Week 15

T, May 3 tba according to students' needs

Th, May 5 **DUE: Final Projects**

Week 16

T, May 10 3 public presentations of final projects; **DUE: Reflection blog/paper.**

Th, May 12 4 public presentations of final projects; **DUE: Peer reviews of sites.**