

Ukrainian Canadian Folklore: An Online Course

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Course description

This course is introductory in nature and provides a survey of Ukrainian folklore and related traditions as they are either found in or relate to Canada. Trends and processes that have shaped the development of these traditions over a period of more than a century receive special attention. Various folkloric phenomena are explored to underline these formative mechanisms. With this kind of approach, the on-line student will come to understand that Ukrainian folklore in Canada constitutes a multifaceted configuration composed of elements drawn from various sources.

Objectives

- to appreciate Canada's Ukrainian folklore complex, past and present
- to delineate the parameters that characterize this cultural phenomenon
- to understand the mechanics of continuity and change that have shaped this segment of Canada's folklore heritage

Prerequisites

There are no special requirements and no credits are offered. You are free to follow this course at your own pace as a form of independent learning. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the material is presented on an undergraduate, university level. Naturally, some knowledge of Ukrainian is an asset, but this is not a prerequisite. Assignments (twenty-two of them) and suggested readings are offered as discretionary adjuncts meant to complement the learning experience by providing additional insights and sources of further information. Many of these materials may be acquired for a nominal charge by contacting the Centre for Ukrainian Canadian Studies at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Course Outline

The course is composed of seven parts plus an appendix, as follows:

1. Introduction to folklore, Ukrainian folklore, and Ukrainian Canadian folklore
 2. The evolution of Ukrainian folklore and folkloristics in Canada
 3. Kinds of oral Ukrainian lore and their features
 4. Non-verbal manifestations of Ukrainian folkloric activity in Canada
 5. Factors that have shaped the development of Ukrainian folklore in Canada
 6. Ukrainian Canadian folklore in the 21st century
 7. The impact of Ukrainian Canadian folklore on other forms of creativity in Canada
- Appendix: Additional readings in English, Audio-Visual Materials

About the author

Robert B. Klymasz has a Ph.D. Degree in Folklore from Indiana University. In a career that spans almost half a century, Dr. Klymasz has taught at several universities and authored many publications on aspects of Ukrainian Canadian folklore. Before retiring in 2000 he served as Curator heading the East European Program at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull (now Gatineau), Quebec. Dr. Klymasz is currently associated with the Centre for Ukrainian Canadian Studies at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. Comments, questions or observations regarding this course are welcome and may be sent to Dr. Klymasz in care of the Centre.

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Part One: Introduction to folklore, Ukrainian folklore, and Ukrainian Canadian folklore

Folklore is an English word adopted internationally by European romantics in the 18th century when songs and stories circulated orally by unlettered segments of society became widely appreciated as expressions of the human spirit in general and of a nation's "soul" in particular. Gradually, because of its numerous links to non-verbal human behavior, the term folklore mushroomed to include, for example, manifestations of folk music, folk art, folk dance, folk wisdom, folk medicine, and folk customs, rites and traditions. In recent times the "lore of the folk" has become popularized as a form of entertainment with professional practitioners performing at folk festivals and other events; and nowadays the term folklore is used more comprehensively to designate simply the traditions of a people.

Folkloristics is a general term often used to designate the study of folklore (compare this with linguistics.) Allied disciplines include ethnography, ethnology, anthropology and ethnomusicology. As suggested above, other fields of study that have close links to folkloristics include history, literary studies, and art.

Fluidity is a main characteristic of folklore. Ever since pre-historic times folksongs and folktales have circulated orally and freely. Each telling of the same story, for instance, is somehow different. And for this reason folklore does not conform to notions concerning any particular fixed, exact text: that is, the same folklore-item (song or story) can circulate in various versions. Although scholars have tried to trace and uncover the original version of particular folksongs and folktales, most of their findings have been tenuous. As a result, issues regarding copyright or "intellectual property" are generally inapplicable to true works of folklore.

Suggested assignment no. 1

As an experiment in the dynamics of folklore, write down one of your favorite jokes. Where did you first hear it? Can you determine where and when it was first told? Who was the first person

to ever tell it? (If your favorite joke is truly folkloric in nature your answers should be dubious, shaky and vague.)

Besides the fluidity typical of all folklore, Ukrainian folklore is deeply rooted in the agrarian lifestyle that has constituted such a fundamental aspect of Ukrainian culture since pre-historic times. Mastery over nature through technology and mechanization, a characteristic of West European culture, came late to Ukraine. Consequently, raw nature, in the widest sense of that phrase, surfaces as a potent factor: that is, in Ukrainian folklore humans join with natural and supranatural forces to produce a landscape of the imagination that is filled with awe, beauty, and drama.

A third characteristic, the cycle, serves as a major structural component in Ukrainian folklore. The cyclical nature of Ukrainian folkloric phenomena can be detected in an underlying predilection for regularity, recurrence or repetition, and predictability. This is richly evidenced by Ukrainian folksong cycles associated with the seasons or calendar (eg. koljadky and the winter folksong cycle) and with crucial moments in the lives of everyday folk (eg. the wedding folk cycle).

Duality constitutes a fourth feature that is characteristic of Ukrainian folklore. This usually surfaces in the form of a set of contrasts between polar opposites such as male and female, spoken or sung, calendric / seasonal or not, solo or group performance, with instrumental accompaniment or not, and so on. For example, the traditional Ukrainian lullaby is a folksong (not folktale) sung (not spoken) as a solo (not as a group performance) by a female (not male) whenever (time of year is not relevant). In contrast, the Ukrainian historical epic (duma in Ukrainian) was almost always delivered as a solo by a male singer who often accompanied himself with a musical folk instrument (such as the bandura) before an appreciative audience. Like the lullaby (but unlike hajivky or Easter singing games, for instance), the epic too could be sung at any time. Such dualities or sets of contrastive factors combine with one another to provide a structural framework for Ukrainian folklore.

It should be noted that, although the mechanisms cited above may be typical of many other folk traditions, Ukrainian folklore is the product of an experience that is unique unto itself. Similarly, Ukrainian folklore in Canada is not merely a duplicate copy of Old Country folklore.

Suggested assignment no. 2

If the foregoing is true, why and in what ways would Ukrainian folklore in Canada differ from antecedents in the Old Country? Itemize your ideas and compare them with findings published on pages 122 to 129 in Robert B. Klymasz, *Ukrainian Folklore in Canada* (New York: Arno Press, 1980).

Communality is a fifth essential aspect of folklore. Like speech, folklore is a living phenomenon that requires a particular kind of setting: one with a giver and a receiver -- a performer and an audience. Hence, it is necessary to distinguish folkloric phenomena from fixed or lifeless products like musical scores, histories, professional art, choreographies, novels and all other forms of written literature. These materials exist as independent products; they can be stored and

shelved. And like some ancient scrolls, they can sometimes lay dormant for centuries without attracting anyone's attention until they are "discovered" as relics of the past.

Relatively speaking, Ukrainian Canadian folklore is a young phenomenon with a start-date that coincides with the arrival of Canada's first groups of Ukrainian immigrants in 1891. (Some historians report that it is likely that at least some immigrants from Ukrainian lands reached Canada before this.) In this respect, Ukrainian folklore in Canada offers researchers a handy laboratory to test the stability of folkloric factors transplanted from abroad. According to available evidence, some folkloric genres failed to cross over from Ukraine into Canada while others survived the journey but only for a short time.

Suggested assignment no. 3

In your opinion, what kinds of folklore from Ukraine survived the longest in Canada? Which kinds of folklore disappeared or faded away? Compare your ideas with *Ukrainian Folklore in Canada* by Robert B. Klymasz (New York: Arno Press, 1980), chapters 3, 4, and 6.

Initially, the folklore brought here by early pioneering settlers from Ukraine constituted a straightforward transfer of Old Country lore. And the same assumption can be applied to subsequent waves of Ukrainian immigrants. However, none of these traditions remained intact indefinitely due to the pressures of a new social and natural environment. In other words, seeming continuity is always accompanied by change, processes common to all living folk traditions.

Ukrainian Canadian folklore today can be viewed as a complex structure composed of an accumulation of different layers interacting with one another in various ways. In general, each layer represents a different wave of Ukrainians coming to Canada with their folklore and traditions. In many respects, however, it is the folklore of Canada's first waves of pioneering settlers that provides the foundation for the entire Ukrainian Canadian folklore complex as it obtains today. There are three reasons for this. Firstly, demographic factors show that the first wave of Ukrainian Canadian immigrants outnumbered the total of all subsequent waves. A second factor conducive for the flourishing of Ukrainian Canadian folklore is the high degree of orality that characterized the first wave and, to a lesser extent, subsequent waves of Ukrainian Canadian immigrants as well.

Suggested assignment no. 4

On pages 96 and 106 (note 81) of his study, *Ukrainians in Canada: the Formative Years 1891-1924* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1991) Orest T. Martynowych provides official census figures for 1916 that indicate that up to 48% of Ukrainian males (over the age of 14) and 70% of Ukrainian females living in rural areas could not read or write in their own native language; and that 86% of the men and 98% of the women could not read or write in English. Seventy years later, in 1986, official data showed (see W.W. Isajiw and A. Makuch, "Ukrainians in Canada," in A.L. Pawliczko, ed. *Ukraine and Ukrainians Throughout the World*, University of Toronto Press, 1994, pp.329-330) that Ukrainians Canadians, 15 years of age and older, "have a significantly higher percentage of persons with less than Grade 9 education than other groups" and that 29% had not completed secondary education.

In your opinion, how does this data regarding literacy and education levels impact on the development of Ukrainian Canadian folklore? Does orality compensate for the inability to read or write and, by extension, prompt the flourishing of a folkloric lifestyle?

Thirdly, today the Prairie Provinces continue to have the nation's highest ratio of Canadians of Ukrainian descent vis-à-vis other ethno-cultural groups in these provinces. (Winnipeg's Ukrainians, for instance, constitute 15% of the City's population in 2001.) In some areas on the Prairies Canadian Ukrainians dominate the ethno-cultural profile and outnumber other ethno-cultural communities. These historical, socio-economic and demographic features along with the high level of orality mentioned above are among the critical factors that have combined to make the Prairies a hotbed of Ukrainian Canadian folkloric activity.

Today, Ukrainian folk traditions constitute an important vehicle for the maintenance and transmission of Ukrainian identity in all parts of Canada. The following Parts show how this happens.

Part Two: The evolution of Ukrainian folklore studies in Canada

The earliest records of Ukrainian Canadian folklore date from the late 1890s and early 1900s; they are found on the pages of *Svoboda*, a Ukrainian newspaper published in the United States (Canada's first Ukrainian newspaper didn't appear until 1903). In this connection, most notable are folksong-texts depicting the Ukrainian Canadian immigrant experience. These were submitted to the newspaper as "poems" by budding Ukrainian immigrant literati who, in effect, were borrowing from the oral tradition as they composed their poetry. The eminent Ukrainian folklorist, Volodymyr M. Hnatjuk (1871-1926), was quick to recognize these works as folkloric creations and, moreover, in a landmark study published in 1902, suggested that they constitute an independent cycle of historical folksongs.

Subsequently -- up to the early 1950's and even more recently -- Canada's super-productive Ukrainian press continued the practice of publishing Ukrainian Canadian folkloric items that included not only song-texts but also stories and reports reflecting the existence of a vibrant folk tradition. It was during this same period that grass-roots enthusiasts published their own collections, some of which became very popular and circulated widely within the Ukrainian Canadian community. In this regard, two compilers deserve special attention: Teodor Fedyk (1873-1949) - for his collection of Ukrainian "Songs about Canada and Austria" (*Pisni pro Kanadu j Avstriju*, Winnipeg, 1908 [1st edition]), and Volodymyr Plavjuk (1886-1961) - for his annotated collection of almost six thousand Ukrainian proverbs and sayings collected in Canada (*Prypovidky abo ukrajins'ko-narodnjafilosofija*, Edmonton, 1946 [1st edition]).

A third figure, Florence Randal Livesay (1874-1953), is historically important for her publication of *Songs of Ukraina* (London, 1916), a collection of Ukrainian folksongs (in English translation) reportedly inspired by her enthusiasm for the folklore of her Ukrainian Canadian friends.

Suggested assignment no. 5

Who was Florence Randall Livesay? Visit your library and locate some of her works. Where did most of her Ukrainian contacts take place? How much of her Ukrainian output was folkloric in nature? And how much of this related to the early Ukrainian Canadian immigrant experience?

A European-trained philologist, Doctor Jaroslav B. Rudnyc'kyj (1910-1995), was the first Canadian scholar to underline the significance of Ukrainian folklore in Canada. His monumental four-volume collection of Ukrainian-Canadian Dialectological and Folklore Texts (Winnipeg, 1956-63) did much to legitimize the study of the Ukrainian segment of Canada's folkloric profile. This upsurge of scholarly interest was reinforced with the publication of an evaluative field Survey of Ethnic Folkmusic Across Western Canada (Ottawa, 1963), written by musicologist Kenneth Peacock (1922-2000) for the National Museum of Canada. "The survey confirmed what was suspected beforehand - that Ukrainian-Canadians have the most widespread and flourishing folkmusic and folklore in Western Canada. After French, English, and Indian, theirs is potentially the largest body of folklore in Canada" (p.11).

Suggested assignment no. 6

In spite of the profusion of Ukrainian folklore material in Canada, it took over half a century before its potential was recognized as an important aspect of Canada's folk culture landscape. Why the delay? For some clues, see Robert B. Klymasz *Ukrainian Folklore in Canada* (New York, 1980), pp. 2-3.)

Attracted to the wealth of Ukrainian Canadian folklore other researchers began to emerge. Internationally recognized standards were applied to the collecting, recording and documentation of Ukrainian Canadian phenomena; and by the end of the 20th century a new generation of academics, many with doctoral degrees, published studies that added breadth and depth to the investigation of Ukrainian folklore in Canada. These included Claudette Berthiaume-Zavada, Brian Cherwick, Robert Klymasz, Bohdan Medwidsky, Andriy Nahachewsky, and Natalia Shostak. (All are still actively engaged in the field of Ukrainian Canadian folkloristics.) Other important researchers, collectors and enthusiasts active today include Radomir Bilash (Edmonton, Alberta), Danny Evanishen (Summerland, British Columbia), and Orysia Tracz (Winnipeg, Manitoba). In addition, graduate students at several universities have enriched the field of Ukrainian Canadian folklore studies with theses and dissertations that explore phenomena ranging from folk dance to folk medicine.

The first course in Ukrainian Canadian folklore ever offered for university credit was taught by Robert Klymasz in the fall of 1976 at St. Andrew's College on the campus of the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. By the end of the 1990s most academic activity in the field of Ukrainian Canadian folklore and allied areas of study was centered at the University of Alberta in Edmonton with its Ukrainian Folklore Archive and Huculak Chair of Ukrainian Culture and Ethnography.

Suggested assignment no. 7

Locate and explore the internet site for "Ukrainian Folklore Archive" along with adjacent sites. What areas of Ukrainian folklore appear to dominate the holdings at the Archive? What, in your opinion, is the value of such an archive?

Several areas of Ukrainian Canadian folklore studies remain poorly researched. Cultural intermixing (metissage in French) and links with church practice and doctrine are two such areas that await in-depth investigation.

Suggested assignment no. 8

Ukrainian perogies (or varenyky) are a popular food in many parts of Canada. Moreover, according to a City of Winnipeg workplace trainer, the key to understanding cultural diversity can be found in the perogy (as reported by Teresa Nickerson in *The Civic Pulse: A Newsletter for City of Winnipeg Staff*, vol.26, issue 3, March 2003, p. 6). Do you agree with this statement? Compare your opinion with that of T. Nickerson, in the article cited above.

Part Three: Kinds of oral Ukrainian lore and their features

Three manners or ways of verbal delivery are characteristic of oral Ukrainian lore: sung (folksong), spoken (folktale / folk narrative) and chanted (recitative).

The folksong tradition has always attracted the most attention as possibly the most remarkable aspect of Ukrainian folklore complex. Other kinds of oral folklore generally lack the folksong's poetic format and, of course, its use of song and, on occasion, instrumental accompaniment.

There are, of course, many kinds of Ukrainian folksongs. These can be divided into two large groupings - ritual and non-ritual. Ritual folksongs are associated with customs linked to (a) calendric and seasonal celebrations such as Christmas and Easter and (b) important moments in the human life cycle like birth, marriage, and death. Non-ritual folksongs are more casual in nature; they can surface at any time and provide outlets for the expression of (a) subjective feelings (like lyrical love songs) or (b) narratives ranging from murder ballads to songs about coming to Canada, and (c) jollity and humor (like merry drinking songs).

Suggested assignment no. 9

Using as a guide the preceding paragraph's comments regarding ritual and non-ritual folksongs, how would you classify Ukrainian lullabies and New Year songs about Malanka? Why?

In contrast to song, much Ukrainian folklore is delivered in spoken form. In this regard, it's useful to consult the authoritative survey of Ukrainian folklore (*Ukrajins'kausnaslovesnist'*, L'viv, 1938; reprint edition: Edmonton, 1983) written by one of Ukraine's prominent folklorists, Filjaret Kolessa (1871-1947). According to him the traditional Ukrainian folktale corpus includes animal tales, tales of magic (fairy tales), legends, mythological stories, anecdotes and jokes, and other kinds of narratives. For more detail regarding Kolessa's classification scheme see Bohdan Medwidsky's "Preface" (in English) to his comprehensive compilation, *A Reader in Ukrainian Folklore: Folk Narratives and Minor Verbal Genres* (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1979, pp. i-iv).

After sung and spoken forms of Ukrainian folklore, a third form of verbal delivery -- chant or recitative - occasionally surfaces as a device that is usually employed to heighten moments of seriousness and solemnity. The old epics of Ukraine, the dumsy, and funeral laments, for instance, were traditionally delivered in the form of chants or recitations; as verbal compositions these favored non-stanzaic, stichic units whereas the Ukrainian folksong corpus preferred stanzaic units (like quatrains and couplets).

In Canada the stanzaic form of poetic composition is exemplified by the popular kolomyjka songs often heard at Ukrainian dance-parties. Non-stanzaic or stichic forms of verbal composition are rarely heard nowadays, except in Ukrainian churches where many liturgical passages, though hardly folkloric in nature, nonetheless show a predilection for the solemnity and high style of free verse that is similar to that found in the dmy or funeral laments, mentioned earlier.

Just as chanted folklore marks a kind of transition between folklore that is sung and folklore that is spoken, so too a third, so-called "minor" genre represents a transition between the two major genres (being the poetic Ukrainian folksong tradition on the one hand, and the Ukrainian folktale or prosaic narrative tradition on the other). This third, "minor" genre of smaller forms is quite extensive and includes mostly smaller forms -- brief verbalizations such as proverbs, sayings or certain expressions, incantations, curses, rimes, jingles, ritualized speeches (eg. a toast to the bride), and even interpersonal greetings (eg. "SlavaIsusuXrystu!" and "Slavanaviky!"). In Canada's Ukrainian community, these are exemplified by the versified greetings of carolers at Christmas and the special jingle often heard on "pussy-willow Sunday" (i.e. Palm Sunday). For more details concerning these so-called "minor genres" see the two works cited earlier - FiljaretKolessa's survey (1938 or 1983) and Bohdan Medwidsky's Reader (1979).

Suggested assignment no. 10

Fieldwork and the search for primary documentation are important aspects of folklore research. To test your stamina as an investigator, find a member of the Ukrainian community who can recite a caroler's greeting or "pussy willow" jingle. Ask for a translation and explanation; and record your findings on paper or audiotape.

In addition to the considerations outlined above, Ukrainian folklore is also gender sensitive: that is, while some genres are shared by both sexes, others are exclusive and reserved for either male or female performers only. Extensive story-telling, for example, is traditionally the domain of male informants while female singers dominate the folksong tradition. In recent times, however, some aspects of the gender division have begun to fade: for instance, the custom of "sowing wheat" on New Year's Day is no longer performed exclusively by boys.

Finally, it is important to note that Ukrainian Canadian folklore and folk traditions are always in flux. At any moment in history, the folklore complex is composed of three interrelated layers; traditional (carry-overs from the past such as an old Christmas carol sung in Ukrainian), transitional (for example, the same carol in English translation), and innovational (for example, the same carol parodied by an individual performer: same tune - radically different text). Distinguishing these three layers from one another helps one appreciate the dynamics of folklore and allied fields of human behaviour.

Part Four: Non-verbal manifestations of Ukrainian folkloric activity in Canada

Many genres of verbal Ukrainian folklore have strong links with non-verbal phenomena -- forms of traditional conduct or behavior (generally known as "customs", "rituals" and "ceremonies") -- that are often accompanied by verse, sung and/or spoken. In this regard, the Ukrainian wedding is perhaps the best example of a custom that employs not only words but also music, art, dance, food and etiquette to produce a rich complex appealing to all the senses. The ritualized use of

props like the traditional wedding bread (korovaj) has its own special set of rules and customs pertaining to how it's made, who makes it, how it's presented and how it's consumed! (For an important and beautifully illustrated work on ritual breads see Olya S. Marko's *Pracjashinky -- A Woman's Work: An Introduction to the Art of Ukrainian Ritual Breads* [Winnipeg, 1987]). Similarly, Ukrainian Easter traditions include egg ornamentation (pysanky); and Ukrainian Christmas traditions are rich in folklore associated with foodways. These instances illustrate the importance of non-verbal folkloric phenomena and underline the need to approach Ukrainian folklore from a perspective that is wide and all-inclusive.

Suggested assignment no. 11

In many parts of Canada a "Ukrainian wedding" is recognized as a unique event or happening. In your opinion, why is this so?

Suggested assignment no. 12

Find a Ukrainian cookbook and look for Christmas, Easter and other recipes connected with Ukrainian customs and rituals. What differences are there between traditional Christmas and Easter menus? (For an earthy discussion relating to Ukrainian ritual foodways, see the article on "Male and Female Principles as Structure in the Ritual Foodways of Ukrainians in Canada" by Robert B. Klymasz, published in *Journal of Ukrainian Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2 (winter 1985) issue no. 19, pp. 15-27.)

Any traditional custom or ritual, therefore, can be dissected and analyzed according to a variety of components. For instance, in her study, *The Word and Wax: A Medical Folk Ritual Among Ukrainians in Alberta* (Edmonton, 1999), Rena Jeanne Hanchuk describes how Ukrainian folk healers approach their clients with "magic" made of word, gesture and natural elements such as beeswax, fire and water.

These and many other practices associated with Ukrainian folk customs are blends or hybrids composed of elements both Christian and pagan in origin. The Christmas dish known as kutja and the ornamented Easter egg, the pysanka, are good examples of such Christian/pagan blends (often cited as "syncretisms"). In modern times, Ukrainian folklore and has been influenced by factors coming from other sources, such as the media. Such influences can appear in various ways and on various levels of observation (such as form, content and function). As discussed later on in this course, these newer developments sometimes mark radical departures from older formulations.

Part Five: Factors that have shaped the development of Ukrainian folklore in Canada

Immigration patterns, literacy levels, and other socio-economic factors relating to the historical development of Ukrainian folklore in Canada were noted earlier in Part One. If we adopt a more expansive perspective and look at the development of Ukrainian folklore in Ukraine itself over the same period of time (that is from 1891 to 2004), a comparative overview shows that the Canadian branch of Ukrainian folklore reflects forces and events that differ from those

experienced in Ukraine itself where decades of political turmoil and unrest - wars, ruthless cultural suppression, and famine - made an indelible mark on the folklore in the Old Country. Of course, during this same period of time, Ukrainian folklore in Canada never, so to speak, stood still: creeping urbanization, inter-ethnic contact, and technology are among the leading factors that impacted on the development of Ukrainian folklore in this country.

With urbanization, the improvement of roads, more schooling and a general movement away from rural life styles, Ukrainian Canadian folklore widened its agrarian base of operations to include citified folkloric retentions. By the year 2000, for instance, popular customs associated with "Ukrainian Christmas Eve" feast were streamlined: the traditional importance of barn animals was dropped, and the ritual flinging of gruel (kutja) at the ceiling and hay strewn under the table disappeared. Moreover, with the eclipse of the old Ukrainian colonies, impromptu house-to-house caroling became a rarity and the practice turned into a fund raiser requiring some degree of prior notification (advance appointments) to operate smoothly.

Suggested assignment no. 13

How much of a purist are you? Do you think a Ukrainian pysanka (ornamented Easter egg) would make an appropriate Christmas gift?

With Canada's increasing multicultural profile, Ukrainian folklore in Canada adjusted to such processes as language loss; and in some communities instead of the Ukrainian language, Ukrainian traditions became the markers of Ukrainian identity. The Ukrainian-English contact situation itself triggered the production of jokes - folklore -- poking fun at language mix-ups: English "speak", and "car" were misunderstood as Ukrainian "spik" (meaning "baked" in English), and "kara" (meaning "punishment" in English); English "Nellie" was misconstrued as "nails", and "pick-up" was pronounced "pea cup." Other language jokes poked fun at the dialect of English spoken by many Canadians of Ukrainian origin, as for example in the following example recorded in 1973:

QUESTION: What's a paradox?

ANSWER: Two Ukrainian mallards ["pair of ducks"].

Marriages with only one Ukrainian spouse were especially crucial to the survival of Ukrainian folklore in Canada. However, since, for instance, the special Easter basket, an integral part of Ukrainian Easter traditions, had no special language requirement, -- anyone could prepare the basket and bring it to church to be blessed. And so, more and more, it became evident that "you don't have to be Ukrainian" to act like one. The absence of language restrictions meant that attractive, non-verbal folk activities like folk dancing and traditional egg ornamentation opened up to anyone who was interested. And so, by the 1970's the question of Ukrainianness emerged as a popular cycle of derisive and occasionally licentious jokes that were formulated as riddles and sought to define the notion of "Ukrainian Canadian" but failed miserably. The following is an example of such a joke recorded in Calgary, Alberta, in 1974:

QUESTION: If there's a row of houses with cesspools in the back of each one, which house belongs to a Ukrainian?

ANSWER: The one with a diving board.

Note that these jokes were told in English (not in Ukrainian!) and typically opened with a riddling question followed by a put-down in the form of a ridiculous or slanderous answer. Here's an example of a popular "Ukrainian joke" from the 1970s:

QUESTION: How do you get twenty-five Ukrainians into a Volkswagen?

ANSWER: Throw in a roll of garlic sausage.

Suggested assignment no. 14

Cycles of "ethnic jokes", like the Ukrainian example given above, were once very productive in Western Canada. Do you know of any other examples? Have you heard such jokes applied to other, non-Ukrainian ethno-cultural groups in Canada? Try to collect a few by writing them down or recording them from your source-informant. For comparative insights, see this article by Robert B. Klymasz, -- "The Ethnic Joke in Canada Today" originally published in *Keystone Quarterly* (XV, 1970, pp.163-173) and republished in *Explorations in Canadian Folklore*, edited by Edith Fowke and Carole H. Carpenter (Toronto, 1985, pp. 320-328).

In addition to external pressures, certain pre-existing or inherent factors provided compensatory mechanisms to help bridge the gap between Ukrainian folk culture and the sea of other traditions that surrounded Ukrainians in Canada. In the area of folk singing, for instance, stylistic factors common to both the Ukrainian and English popular song traditions in Canada include the four-line stanza, the predilection for couplet formations, identical rhyming arrangements, repetitions, refrains, and instrumental accompaniment.

Moreover, the Ukrainian folksong tradition was well prepared, so to speak, to accommodate some of the productive patterns that characterize the English-language folksong tradition on this continent. For example, a ten-syllable (decasyllabic) line composed of two units of five syllables (5 + 5) is a classical formation in Ukrainian folk verse. Such lines are found in popular North American songs like "You Are My Sunshine", "This Land Is Your Land", and others. It is hardly surprising, then, that formal similarities like a decasyllabic line have prompted the popularity of such songs within the Ukrainian Canadian community where the texts are translated and adapted, as shown by the following comparison of initial lines from "This Land Is Your Land" in both English and Ukrainian versions:

This land is your land, / this land is my land, = 5 + 5 syllables

Ce nashazemlja, / cenashe pole, = 5 + 5 syllables

(literal translation of Ukrainian adaptation:

This land is our land, / these are our fields)

As illustrated by the example given above, structural similarities can provide points of introduction that help Ukrainian folklore in Canada to absorb features from other, non-Ukrainian traditions.

The need for Ukrainian folklore in Canada to change and adapt was greatly accelerated by the proliferation of global technologies such as the printed word, radio, television, sound recordings, and electronic communication systems like internet and e-mail. These mechanical, impersonal vehicles of transmission signaled the eclipse of the old face-to-face interchanges (eg. storytelling sessions and spontaneous outbursts of song and dance) that were characteristic of compact Ukrainian rural colonies and urban ghettos. With the dispersal of these immigrant communities these same technologies enabled Ukrainian Canadian folklore to survive and flourish even though, by the end of the 20th century, the folk tradition was largely stripped of its original Ukrainian-language veneer.

As a result of such crucial shifts, traditional Ukrainian recipes were now handed down to younger generations via English-language cookbooks, Ukrainian folk music turned to the recording studio and began to meet the demands of the music industry for something different by marketing a special kind of Ukrainian sound (for instance, Ukrainian "country music" in Western Canada); and public festivals celebrating Ukrainian folkways sprang up across the country. In other words, Ukrainian folklore in Canada had entered the world of commercialism by packaging its traditions to meet the needs and standards of a wider society and by offering these as a commodity or product with price-tag attached. In 2002, for example, the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge in Jasper Park, Alberta, advertised a "Ukrainian New Year" package (starting at \$598 for two adults) scheduled for a period of three days (January 10 to 12, 2003) that offered "a boisterous Eastern European New Year's Party. The best Ukrainian music and traditions will be showcased throughout the weekend with frequent concerts, a performance by the Vohon Ukrainian Dance Ensemble, a celebration of the Feast of Jordan and Divine Liturgy, a visit from Saint Nicholas and a kids' program." (from Doctor's Review, October 2002, p.35).

Specialization became another trend: some excelled at music-making, others in Easter egg ornamentation, others in Ukrainian folk dancing, and so on. Accordingly, Ukrainian Canadian folklore became the domain of specialist-practitioners whose role as carriers of the tradition was shared by enthusiasts, promoters, and academic scholars.

Suggested assignment no. 15

Acquire a copy of the current Yevshan Catalog of Ukrainian Music, Books, Videos, Software, Gift, Art and Much More! by writing to YEVSHAN, Box 325, Beaconsfield, Quebec, H9W 5T8, Canada. The catalog enables shoppers to order Ukrainian folkloric products by via mail, telephone, on-line or fax. In your opinion, which products are NOT folkloric items? Why?

Part Six: Ukrainian Canadian folklore in the 21st century

As mentioned earlier, the rise of commercialism, consumerism and related market forces is probably the single most important factor influencing the nature of Ukrainian Canadian folklore at the beginning of the 21st century. Books, commercial recordings and planned events have replaced the immediacy of face-to-face orality that once characterized the production, dissemination and circulation of Ukrainian folklore in Canada. The deliberate self-consciousness of packaging and marketing introduced modifications that avoid variation and favour representativeness, condensation / compression, encoding, consolidation and standardization. A good example of such processes is reflected in the work of Vasyl' Avramenko (1895-1981)

whose performance-oriented choreographies dominated the Ukrainian folk dance in North America for many years and transformed Ukrainian village dance into a professionally staged attraction.

These processes have introduced a number of radical shifts on several levels of observation. For instance, black-and-red cross-stitch has become widely accepted as an emblematic stamp of Ukrainianess that shows on paper (eg. book marks), ceramics (salt and pepper shakers), plastic decals, Easter eggs, lampshades, earrings, and so on.

These trends typify the numerous Ukrainian festivals held across Canada in recent years. Over a period of only a few days Ukrainian folk traditions ranging from wedding customs to Easter egg ornamentation are displayed and paraded to show ethnic pride. These festivals often sponsor song, dance, and instrumental competitions that are, in reality, folkloric events meant to foster pride among younger members of the community.

Suggested assignment no. 16

Travel literature published by provincial departments of tourism in the three prairie provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba) typically focus attractions featuring Ukrainian folk traditions. On the basis of such literature (usually available free upon request) determine what kind of folklore is being marketed and why.

The seemingly materialistic, product-oriented aspects of Ukrainian folkloric activity in Canada are offset by others that, in general, focus on three overlapping factors: roots, ethnicity, and joy. The roots factor is reflected in the growth of genealogical interests, the popularity of family reunions (especially family-clans with ancestors who arrived in Canada as pioneering settlers), and even in obituaries -- as exemplified by newspaper obituaries -- person-focused narratives that often echo the heroic epics of olden times. These include references to various predeceased family members as well as survivors, Old Country origins, various folkloric pursuits, sign-off poetry, and the obligatory final farewell in Ukrainian (vichnajapamjat') usually translated as "Memory Eternal".

Suggested assignment no. 17

Newspapers such as The Winnipeg Free Press have a sizeable Ukrainian Canadian readership and frequently publish obituaries featuring the elements listed above. Find samples that follow the pattern suggested above. Are women treated differently from men? Are there other predisposing factors that determine the nature of the obituary's form and content? In your opinion, do such obituaries constitute a particular productive "genre" of Ukrainian Canadian folklore?

The second factor, ethnicity, shows a focus on Ukrainianness and its folkloric components such as folk dancing, traditional foods, folk art, and customs associated weddings and calendric celebrations like Christmas, New Year's Eve ("Malanka"), and Easter. Similarly, church related events like parish teas, community celebrations (praznyk, xram, "perogy dinners") and even bingos are also filled with folkloric activities. To some extent, this factor is driven by loyalties both overt and unconscious linked to the first factor, the roots factor, outlined above.

The third factor, joy, is simply the focus on jollity - or, so to speak, "having a good time." In recent years, for example, the Ukrainian "zabava" (dance social) has become a very popular venue for the expression of Ukrainianness in the form of music, dance, food and drink.

After a century of development, Ukrainian folklore in Canada has also begun to evolve along regional lines as a reflection of the different processes, needs and pressures that characterize individual Ukrainian communities across Canada. These regional pockets of Ukrainian folklore in Canada form part of a larger mosaic: all these pockets are related, yet each operates differently in keeping with local trends and as a reflection of the regions' socio-economic and historical dynamics. For example, annual summer festivals held during the summer in Toronto (Ontario), Dauphin (Manitoba), Vegreville (Alberta) and elsewhere all celebrate Ukrainian folkways; but each festival does this differently.

Suggested assignment no. 18

Attend two Ukrainian summer festivals and compare their similarities and differences. Which festival is more successful in terms of entertainment value and why?

Currently, Ukrainian folklore in Canada operates according to three large modes: folk, ethnic and national. The first mode (folk), is represented by the so-called "raw", unadulterated, natural product (as exemplified by J.B. Rudnyc'kyj's four volumes of Ukrainian-Canadian Dialectological and Folklore Texts published in Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1956-1963). The second mode (ethnic) underlines Ukrainianness by using folkloric material to focus on Ukrainian identity (eg. the Ukrainian jokes in Part Five). The third mode (national) uses folklore as a public affirmation of national distinction to foster pride and attract favourable attention (Ukrainian festivals are a good example here).

Part Seven: The impact of Ukrainian Canadian folklore on other forms of creativity in Canada

In Part Five, above, attention was paid to how Ukrainian folklore in Canada changed to meet the demands of a new and sometimes hostile, non-Ukrainian environment. This part, however, focuses on how Ukrainian Canadian folklore contributes to the creative arts in mainstream Canada. This topic is too extensive to be treated here in any comprehensive, in-depth manner. Nonetheless, the following paragraphs offer examples that underscore the main features that characterize this phenomenon.

Quite naturally, this influence is especially evident in the work of Canadian writers, artists, filmmakers, and musicians of Ukrainian origin. As far as visual artists are concerned, William Kurelek (1927-1977) is undoubtedly the most important painter and an outstanding example of a Canadian Ukrainian artist.

Suggested assignment no. 19

Many artworks by William Kurelek reflect a strong attachment to Ukrainian folklore in Canada. These have been reproduced in several of his books. Find five Kurelek paintings (skip his pencil sketches) that reflect this attachment, and provide a list itemizing your five selections along with

pertinent data (titles, machine copies showing works chosen, bibliographical references, other supporting documentation, and your own comments of justification).

Besides those of Ukrainian origin, non-Ukrainian artists, writers, and musicians have also incorporated Ukrainian folklore into their works as well. In the field of imaginative writing, for example, French Canadian Gabrielle Roy (1909-1983) and English Canadian W.P. Kinsella are both famous writers of mainstream Canadian fiction whose works draw on Ukrainian folk traditions in Canada.

Suggested assignment no. 20

Compare Gabrielle Roy's novel, *Where Nests the Waterhen*, with W.P. Kinsella's novel, *Box Socials*. What elements of Ukrainian Canadian folklore are used and in what manner? How successful are these efforts, and whose do you appreciate most? Why?

In the field of music, John Beckwith, one of Canada's leading composers, took a Ukrainian carol recorded in Manitoba and arranged it for alto voice and piano. Published in his *Five Songs* [from Canadian folk collections] (Waterloo, Ont.: Waterloo Music Co., 1970), the piece was recorded and given its world premiere by the renowned contralto, Maureen Forrester, at a performance at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa on May 16, 1970.

Suggested assignment no. 21

Art photography and filmmaking are missing from the examples given above. Filmmakers Halya Kuchmij and John Paskievich along with photographers Orest Semchishen and Ed Burtynsky are all Ukrainian Canadians who are prominent figures in these particular areas of creativity. Select one filmmaker and one photographer and trace the role of Ukrainian folklore as found in their work. Looking for differences and similarities, compare and evaluate their individual approaches to Ukrainian folklore and folk traditions.

Ukrainian folklore has always influenced the work of professional artists by providing a rich and seemingly infinite source of inspiration. In Canada, as elsewhere, this trend continues today and warrants investigative documentation as well as scholarly analysis. The larger question, of course, is whether this wellspring will ever dry up. Inconceivable?

Suggested assignment no. 22

For a comprehensive perspective on Ukrainian Canadian folklore, pull together your work on the twenty-two "suggested assignments" given in the course of this program of independent study. The resultant compilation will constitute a valuable documentary - a "snapshot" reflecting the state of Ukrainian folk traditions in Canada. We at the Centre for Ukrainian Canadian Studies would love to see your work!

Appendix

Additional Readings in English

Note: The following works were not cited earlier but warrant the attention of those looking for more information. The list is eclectic and far from exhaustive.

Chyzhevs'kyj, Dmytro. "The Oral Tradition" in his *A History of Ukrainian Literature* (Eng. trans. by G.S.N. Luckyj). Littleton, Colorado, 1975), pp.18-25.

Evanishen, Danny. *Carrots to Coins and Other Ukrainian Folk Tales Retold in English*. Summerland, British Columbia, 2000. This is the seventh volume in Evanishen's folktale series. An avid collector, his "aim is to collect all the Ukrainian folk tales in Canada and funny stories of pioneer days."

Georges, Robert A. and Michael Owen Jones. *Folkloristics: An Introduction*. Indiana University Press, 1995.

Klymasz, Robert B. 'Svieto': *Celebrating Ukrainian-Canadian Ritual in East Central Alberta Through the Generations* (Edmonton, 1992).

Kononenko, Natalie. *Ukrainian Minstrels: And the Blind Shall Sing*. Armonk, N.Y.: 1988. Although it has no direct links with Ukrainian Canadian folklore, this work is possibly the best English-language study in the field of Ukrainian folkloristics.

Medwidsky, B[ohdan]. "Folklore" in *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, vol. 1 (University of Toronto Press, 1984), pp. 909-911. Other worthwhile entries in the same volume include "Ethnography", "Folk architecture", "Folk beliefs", "Folk calendar", "Folk customs and rites", "Folk dance", "Folk etymology", "Folk medicine", "Folk musical instruments", "Folk oral literature", and "Folk songs."

Nahachewsky, Andriy. "New Ethnicity and Ukrainian Canadian Social Dances," *Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 115, no. 456 (spring 2002), pp. 175-190.

Stechishin, Savella. *Traditional Ukrainian Cookery*. Winnipeg, 1967 (or later editions). This work constitutes a classic in its field.

Audio-Visual Materials

Audio-visual materials relating to Ukrainian Canadian folklore are quite extensive. Many have historical value and are difficult to obtain. The items below are Canadian productions generally available across Canada through library services and/or specialized retail outlets.

[audio-cassette:] *Slid pozhuravljax / Ukrainian Immigrant Songs*. Performed by songstress, Luba Bilash, and released by Luba Ventures (Kyjiv / Edmonton) in 1992. Includes texts in both Ukrainian and English translation. Difficult to obtain, this cassette features Bilash's interpretations of songs collected in the 1960s by Robert B. Klymasz and published in his collection, *An Introduction to the Ukrainian Immigrant Folksong Cycle* (Ottawa, 1970). The latter work is available in most larger libraries and includes three "flexidisks" (sound recordings) tucked away in a pocket inside the back cover.

[compact disc:] *Prairie Nights and Peacock Feathers* (2000) with the Paris to Kyiv Ensemble headed by vocalist, Alexis Kochan. This album along with Kochan's other releases features traditional Ukrainian folksongs performed in a unique interpretive style.

[compact disc:] *Ukrainian Folk Ballads from Western Canada* (2000) with annotated texts in English, French and Ukrainian. Released by the Canadian Museum of Civilization (Gatineau, Quebec), the disc features a selection of Ukrainian folk ballads recorded in the field by Robert Klymasz in the 1960s and stored in the Museum's permanent sound archives.

[video / film, 30 min. approx.:] *Luchak's Easter*. Documents Bukovinian Easter graveside ceremonial at Willingdon, Alberta, May, 1973. Released by the National Museum of Man in 1975 and distributed by the National Film Board of Canada. Accompanying notes and transcriptions (11 typescript pages) available from the Canadian Museum of Civilization (Gatineau, Quebec).

[video / film, 101 min.:] *My Mother's Village* by John Paskievich for the National Film Board of Canada (2001). Includes "raw", authentic ethnographic footage that samples Ukrainian folklore in Ukraine towards the end of the 20th century.