

**Folk 202 Spring 2020**  
**Assignment 2: Essay on Group**

**Due in print at start of class Monday, March 23**

For your second assignment, write an essay about a folk group to which you belong (or have belonged in the past). You may select a group, team, or club that is either formally or informally defined. The choice of group is entirely up to you, but please do not write about “UNC students” or “Tarheel fans.” **Pick something specific that allows for rich description and analysis.**

**Structure:** Your essay should include **a)** an introductory paragraph, **b)** a clearly defined argument/thesis, **c)** multiple paragraphs supporting your argument/thesis and exploring 3 examples of group culture, and **d)** a conclusion.

**Early on, describe a folk group to which you belong.** Describe who is a member, what they do, when and where they do it, etc. Consider how the group has changed over time. Identify what kind of group this is and what holds the group together. The best papers will draw on outside research; cite your sources as appropriate.

**Drawing on your sense of folklore, describe three or more examples of group culture.** These may include shared knowledge, practices, or skills that are common within the group, *or* group traditions. Give a succinct account of what each example is—a narrative, esoteric vocabulary (slang), a way of cooking, a special handshake, a kind of material folklore, etc.—and how group members engage it.

**Using this information, develop a thesis/argument about one or more of the following aspects of group formation:**

1. how new members enter the group—how membership is “performed” or “enacted” among or for newcomers
2. how the group or its members engage in exoteric communication—how group folklore is used to communicate to/for/with/about outside groups or non-members

3. how group boundaries are contested or negotiated—including the ways that issues of boundaries are or are not resolved
4. how the group and its members manage issues of internal differentiation (hierarchy, rank, status, etc.)—including how status/rank is achieved and displayed, how this affects obligations and privileges, and/or how the group works to avoid a particular imbalance of power.

### **Further Details**

This essay should be about five pages long (12pt. font, no monkey business with margins). You may write in the first person. The tone should be academic, but not stuffy. Short citations will be appropriate for class readings (author, title, page) and lecture notes (source, date). Outside sources should receive citation using the Chicago Manual of Style Author-Date format (accessible from the library website or here:

[https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html)).

Please pay attention to the following:

- Writing mechanics: punctuation, usage and grammar.
- Organization: strong introduction, controlling preview of main ideas, clear paragraph organization, transitions between big ideas.
- Thoughtfulness: major ideas from course, appropriate use of vocabulary, a convincing, significant and nuanced argument.