



**Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies**  
College of Humanities and Social Sciences  
4400 University Drive, MS 5G3, Fairfax, VA 22030  
Phone: 703-993-8762 Fax: 703-993-5585 Email: mais@gmu.edu

## **Capstone Project Guidelines for Folklore Studies**

### Requirements

#### **Credits**

Folklore Studies students who elect to do a project typically register for 1 credit of MAIS 798: Interdisciplinary Studies Project. Students could conceivably take one fewer 3-credit electives and take 4 credits of MAIS 798.

#### **Formats**

All Folklore Studies projects must be based on research and require a bibliography. Projects may include fieldwork, but fieldwork is not required.

Folklore Studies projects may consist of written work, in which case the length of the final document is contingent on the number of credits involved. A 1-credit project involves a minimum of 20 pages, while a 4-credit project would be a minimum of 40 pages. These page lengths do not include bibliography, appendices, photographs, and other matter.

Folklore Studies projects may also take the form of a CD or DVD, discussion and design of a course, a grant proposal, an exhibit, a draft of legislation, preparation of a festival plan, a performance, etc. These non-traditional forms will still require research. They must also include a written component, but it can be shorter in length than a project that takes a written form only.

#### **Projects and Internships**

Folklore Studies projects may be an extension of the student's internship. If so, the project will require additional research that extends beyond the work done for the internship. The topic should also differ from that of a paper or project conducted for the internship. Fieldwork is still optional.

#### **Projects Committees**

All MAIS project committees are composed of 3 members. The chair of the committee must be a member of the Mason graduate faculty. The second member must be a member of the Mason faculty, graduate or otherwise. The third member may be Mason faculty or a person with expertise on the project topic who holds at least a Master's degree.



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### Examples of Folklore Studies Projects

- Erica Wilmore completed an internship on “Professional Storytelling: Tales for Healing and Education” by studying with storyteller Gail Rosen of Baltimore. For her ENGL 604: Folklore Internship, she wrote response papers on readings, wrote a journal, and wrote a research paper on contemporary storytelling. For her Folklore Studies project, she wrote a research paper that both reflects on her folktale performances since her internship ended and researches how her tales and telling relate to healing, education, and professional storytelling. She also performed three of her tales at George Mason University and led a discussion afterward.
- Aaron Hibbard completed an internship in the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress, helping archive and describe (using the Tale Motif index) manuscripts in the National Storytelling collection. He wrote response papers, a journal, and a paper on the process of tale-typing folktales. For his Folklore Studies project, he conducted fieldwork with employees of the American Folklife Center about ethics in archiving and wrote a research paper on ethical practices in archives.
- Christina Bishop completed an internship at a local school, teaching elementary students to collect oral history and folklore, and holding an event where students presented their work to their parents and others. For her Folklore Studies project, she wrote an instructional template for teaching elementary school children to do a family folklore collecting project.