

British Folk song and its influence on literature

Start date 06 March 2020**End date**

08 March 2020

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge
CB23 8AQ**Tutor** Polly Paulusma**Course code**

1920NRX029

Director of ISP and LL

Sarah Ormrod

**For further information on this
course, please contact the Lifelong
Learning team**Zara Kuckelhaus, Fleur Kerrecoe
shortcourses@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 764637**To book**See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Polly Paulusma is a working musician and an external supervisor for the Cambridge English Faculty. She currently teaches Practical Criticism and supervises students with special research interests in literature and song.

She is a CHASE scholar at UEA where she is completing her PhD on Angela Carter's influence from folk singing. She has been teaching since 2008. After studying English at Cambridge, she became a signed recording artist in 2003, releasing albums on Bjork's label One Little Indian and founding her own folk label Wild Sound which has supported the work of nine other independent folk/acoustic artists.

Her albums have achieved international critical acclaim and her songs have been published by Sony/ATV in Los Angeles. She has toured the USA, the UK and Europe, supporting Bob Dylan, Jamie Cullum, Coldplay and Marianne Faithfull in her travels. She brings all her music-making and academic experience to her interdisciplinary research and teaching practice.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
20:30 – 22:00	Session 1 Field trip to Cambridge Folk Club (pending confirmation) or performance of traditional folk songs by local musicians
22:00	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Session 2 Passing on folk songs - the oral tradition
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 3 Passing on folk songs - the textual tradition
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	Session 4 Steve Roud (guest speaker) - the mid-C20th folk song revival
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	Session 5 Field recordings, Topic Records and the impact of vinyl
21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Session 6 Folk song/C19th literature - John Clare, Thomas Hardy
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 7 Contemporary folk song/literature - Angela Carter, Deborah Grabien, Kerry Andrew, Emily Portman
12:45	Lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

This course aims to introduce students to the rich British folk song tradition, and to think about ways folk song has affected literature. After the course, it is hoped students will think further about other ways folk song is present in our culture.

Through tutor presentations, listening to recordings, group discussions, close readings, analysis of archival materials, and perhaps even musical participation (not obligatory!) students will learn about folk song's rich and varied modes of dissemination, and just some of the ways in which it has touched the imaginations of writers.

No prior musical experience is necessary, nor any expertise in the specific authors listed: we will be doing close readings of small selections from their works. Prior knowledge of traditional British folk song is not essential, but there will be music listening sessions and perhaps even an opportunity to sing or play if participants wish, so an aesthetic resonance with the form would be recommended

Content:

Upon arrival on Friday we will either take a field trip to the Cambridge Folk Club to participate in a real club night in action (tbc) or we will recreate a folk club at Madingley Hall and enjoy performances from the course leader and others of folk songs that will feature during the course.

On Saturday, the first two sessions will introduce students to the story of British folk song, its origins among rural communities, the waves of collectors who thought they were saving it but whose actions perhaps had unintended consequences, and the tensions between oral, textual, and recorded modes of transmission.

In the afternoon, Steve Roud will be our guest speaker. Steve is the leading authority in the UK on British folk song. He is the editor of the *New Penguin Book of English Folk Songs* and author of the widely celebrated 2016 work, *Folk Song in England*.

In the evening, we will turn to the works of C19th writers John Clare and Thomas Hardy to explore ways in which their experience of rural song seeped into their literary imaginations, before retreating to the bar for more discussion.

On Sunday, we will explore folk song's influence on C20th writers with a focus on the writing of Angela Carter, her involvement in the 1960s folk revival, and its impact upon her writing. We will examine in particular her short story 'The Erl-King' (which is in her short story anthology *The Bloody Chamber*) and discuss its relationship to The Child Ballads.

In the second session, we will see how folk song inspires writers working now — Deborah Grabien's Haunted Ballad series (http://deborahgrabien.com/?page_id=6) and Kerry Andrew's 'Swan Song' — and how writers infused by this music inspire musical production through the work of Emily Portman, in a cycle of influences.

Presentation of the course:

This course will encourage student learning through clear and informative tutor presentations which will include lots of music listening and comparisons of texts and performances, class discussions, group work and pair work, working with a new, undiscovered archive, a field visit to a folk club, and hopefully some participatory singing in the bar!

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

- Form a good understanding of the British folk song tradition, its history of oral transmission and the interventions of waves of collectors, and its modern life in the fourth wave.
- Increase their familiarity with folk songs themselves
- Be encouraged to participate in a local folk club
- Understand some ways in which writers are influenced by folk songs, and music more generally
- Have the potential to start seeing folk song's influences in wider culture
- Plant seeds and ideas in students for onward projects and research

Reading and resources list

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk *

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Steve Roud	<i>Folk Song in England</i>	Faber, 2017
Thomas Hardy	<i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i>	Any
John Clare	'A faithless shepherd courted me'	Any
George Deacon	<i>John Clare and the Folk Tradition</i>	Francis Boutle, 2002
Angela Carter	'The Erl-King' in <i>The Bloody Chamber</i>	1979; Vintage, 1995
Kerry Andrew	Swansong	Jonathan Cape, 2018

Website addresses

Child Ballads	https://archive.org/details/englishscottishp01with
The Full English	https://www.vwml.org/projects/vwml-the-full-english
Broadside Ballads	http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/
Mainly Norfolk	https://mainlynorfolk.info/folk/songs/
Sacred Texts	https://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/eng/child/index.htm
Emily Portman	http://www.emilyporntman.co.uk/

Additional information

Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:
<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk or +44 (0)1223 746262.

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 13 November 2019