

Folk and Community Arts Organizations: Creating, Producing and Managing (Intro or Adv)

Group Study, 4 credits – Hartsdale Unit (HVC)

Instructor: Dr. Cathy Ragland

Community-based arts and folk arts organizations enable communities to preserve and strengthen the arts and traditional culture and heritage they value by providing resources and a forum for these traditions to continue and flourish and for all others in the community to share in the expression and understanding of these traditions and practices.

Co-sponsored with the **New York Folklore Society**, this study is designed for students interested in non-profit community arts and folk arts programming, presenting, researching (field work methods), documenting, archiving and managing. “Folk and Community Arts Organizations: Creating, Producing and Managing” is a comprehensive look at how arts organizations operate, the services they provide local communities and the public at large, the wide range of programs they create and produce, the research and documentation that informs their work, how they educate youth about the arts and local communities, and grant-writing and fund-raising.

Community-based arts and folk arts organizations promote a richer community through broad participation in the making and personal experience of art by bringing the work of living artists to the community at large. Many work with school children and adults, local colleges, museums, cultural centers, and artists themselves. This study is set up as a colloquium with seven on site meetings in total. Five of the seven meetings will focus on a different topic in the field and will feature panel discussions, forums, workshops and lecture/demonstrations. Invited guests actively working in the field will discuss the many aspects of community arts and folk arts organizations and their important work.

Meeting dates for the study are: 10/16, 10/23, 11/1 (Saturday), 11/6, 11/13, 12/4, and 12/18. Times are 6-8pm, except the Saturday session (10am-3pm).

Session 1 (10/16): Introductory session with instructor only. Discuss course philosophy, layout, requirements, readings, and assignments with instructor. Moderated Online discussions/activities will continue throughout the study on ANGEL (ESC’s online learning website).

Session 2 (10/23): Forum. “Community and Folk Arts Organizations: How They Work.” Directors from various community and folk arts organization from around the region talk about their organization’s mission, structure, types of programs they offer and the communities they serve. They will also discuss models for working with folk and community-based artists as well as partnering institutions such as museums, cultural centers, etc. Many participants are also founders or co-founders of their organizations and they will offer unique insights into how an organization progresses from dream to reality.

Session 3 (11/1): Workshop/Hands-on activities (Saturday). “Fieldwork Techniques: Documenting, Collecting and Archiving Community-based Research.” Participants will talk about their experiences and strategies for conducting research/fieldwork in their community (i.e. preparation for the field, research and interviewing strategies, how to use and manage recording and video equipment, etc.). Participants will also discuss their own fieldwork experience and offer tips and answer questions. Students will gain “hands on” experience and learn to use and practice with audio/video equipment (including their own). What to do with the material once you have collected it is just as important as the research itself and students will also learn about labeling, storing and archiving.

Session 4 (11/6): Panel session. “Researching, Presenting and Producing Public Arts Programs.” Folklorists and Project directors talk about how they create and present public programs such as festivals, seminars, workshops, exhibits, etc. in a variety public and community-based venues which not only entertain but educate. They will also discuss their experiences working within different communities and how they strike a balance between satisfying the needs and expectations of various members of the community and the public at large. This is a good follow-up to the fieldwork and documentation workshop as students will learn how research is crucial to the design and focus of a successful arts program.

Session 5 (11/13): Panel. “Folk and Community Arts in Schools.” Education directors, folklorists and teaching artists gather to discuss special programs and initiatives they direct within many arts organizations. They will talk about how they train folk and community-based artists to work with students and provide lecture/demonstration programs in the classroom and the materials they create (such as study guides) to assist teachers and students in learning. Many of these participants also design and implement programs which teach students about the arts and cultures of many ethnic communities through programs they design for museums, community centers, libraries and other locales. They will discuss such collaborations and the training of artists to work in this capacity and how to successfully engage and educate young audiences.

Session 6 (12/4): Forum/Workshop. “Fundraising and Grantwriting in the Arts.” Development directors and independent grantwriters of various folk and community arts organizations will discuss their work and strategies for researching funding opportunities and raising money for their organization and its projects. They will offer successful grantwriting tips and how to match you project with the right funder(s). Representatives from funding organizations will also be on hand to talk about the type of projects they fund, how they evaluate grants and what a successful grant looks like.

Session 7 (12/18): Wrap-up of study with instructor only. Discussion and presentation of final projects.