Public Practice Concentration in Folklore and Ethnomusicology

Public folklorists and ethnomusicologists work primarily in government or non-profit arts, cultural, or educational organizations, such as arts councils, historical societies, libraries, museums, or organizations devoted specifically to folk arts, culture, heritage, tourism or folklore. They are engaged in a variety of activities, including (but not limited to) field research and documentary work, and the production of public programs or educational materials, such as performances, artists’ residencies, exhibitions, festivals, sound recordings, radio and television programs, films, videos, and books. Outside the academy as well as in its professional schools and outreach programs, folklorists and ethnomusicologists work as mediators between vernacular and institutional discourses and agendas, or apply folkloristic techniques and knowledge to social problems. In public health folklorists undertake ethnographies of community practices, belief systems, and communicative norms in order to design more effective public information campaigns, preventive strategies, community resources, and means of treatment. In social work, folklorists and ethnomusicologists work in areas such as refugee resettlement, legal advocacy, technical assistance in marketing traditional arts, and in community conflict resolution. In gerontology, folklorists and ethnomusicologists do research on memory arts, personal narrative, music and life review. Folklorists and ethnomusicologists also work with labor unions, human rights organizations, neighborhood organizations, legal organizations and citizen campaigns.

The Department offers a Public Practice Concentration in Folklore and Ethnomusicology focused on public and applied areas of our work. Any M.A. or Ph.D. level graduate student in the Department and Ph.D. minors from other departments, are eligible to pursue this concentration. Our Department currently offers (on a rotational basis) the following courses as part of a public and applied folklore curriculum. Courses marked practicum laboratory or advanced project are hands on – often based in Traditional Arts Indiana, the Archives of African-American Music and Culture, the Archives of Traditional Music, the IU Art Museum or the Mathers’ Museum of World Cultures. The Curriculum as a whole is coordinated by our Professor of Practice, Jon Kay, to make sure students are properly placed and properly supervised and evaluated. We also have coordinated placements with the Nevada Council on the Arts, the Kentucky Folklife Program and the American Folklore Society. Less formal but nevertheless important relationships exist with the Smithsonian Institution’s Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and CityLore in New York.

The concentration consists of 4 classes for a total of 12 credits. Requirements are:

1. **F532** Public Practice in Folklore and Ethnomusicology (the gateway course)
2. One of our Practicum or laboratory courses - **F803** Practicum, **F802 TAI Practicum**
   or **F805 Laboratory in Public Practice** (3 crs.)
3. 2 approved elective courses from the list below*

List of approved public practice electives:
An in-house faculty committee consisting of professors from ethnomusicology and folklore, chaired by Jon Kay and working with the Graduate Recorder, oversee all aspects of the concentration and advise students on courses, signing off on the practicum and electives that are to fulfill this requirement. Students seek the advice and signature of a member of the in-house committee during the period of advising, prior to signing up for classes. A sheet for the required classes, with the appropriate signatures, is created and maintained in the student’s file.

Current students in the Department who pursue the concentration may have electives and practicum credits grandfathered in (with the approval of the in-house committee) but must take the required F532 Public Practice in Folklore and Ethnomusicology course.

Upon successful completion of this program of courses, the committee adds a letter to the student’s permanent file indicating successful completion of the concentration. This letter describes the concentration’s scope and purpose and a copy of this letter is provided to the student for inclusion in portfolios, internship and job application packets.

**Course descriptions of public practice elective courses:**

**F533 Applied Folklore:** Prepares students to work as mediators between vernacular and institutional discourses and agendas; apply folkloristic skills to social problems solving; trace the history of applied folklore; provide training in cultural mediation, rapid ethnography, needs analysis, other applied skills; survey work of folklorists in important applied areas including law, medicine, education.

**E533 Applied Ethnomusicology:** Investigates histories and trajectories of applied ethnomusicology, while preparing students to conceptualize and develop their own work in the subfield. Will map definitions of applied, advocacy, activist, engaged, and public sector work and trace connections to other disciplines. Discussions focus on research approaches, tools, and methodologies within applied ethnomusicology circles.

**F510 Multimedia in Ethnomusicology:** Explores the use of multimedia technology in five basic areas of ethnographic activity: field research, laboratory research (transcription and analysis), preservation, presentation, and publication. Knowledge of technological concepts and skill development in the use of various technologies are pursued through a project-based approach, which emphasizes learning by doing.
F722 Activism, Engagement, & Critical Ethnography: An in-depth investigation into the field of critical ethnography. Explores the theoretical, methodological, and applied aspects of qualitative research, seeking a better understanding of how ethnographic approaches may be mobilized for policy change, the creation of emancipatory knowledge, and the pursuit of social justice.

F730 Museums & Material Culture: This class analyzes the complex relationship between human beings and the material world they inhabit and create to better comprehend the institution of the museum. An understanding of material culture helps us view how makers, users, and viewers relate to objects in homes, commercial establishments and eventually, in museums.

F755 Tourism, Authenticity & Nostalgia: Considers critical discourses surrounding intertwined notions of tourism, authenticity, and nostalgia. Explores tourism from cultural, symbolic, and social perspectives, paying particular attention to the tourist gaze and the relationship of the visitor to the people/culture being visited. Examines notions of authenticity and the way such notions are commodified and configured.

F731 Curatorship: The course presents basic skills for research and professional practice in social science and humanities museums. In addition to curatorial skills, the course explores how theoretical, ethical, and methodological problems are addressed in day-to-day museum work. Taught in campus museums, the course includes hands-on activities, seminar discussion, and collections research.

F804 Heritage and Cultural Property: Examines some of the central debates regarding the various uses and strategic deployments of the concept of heritage and how these intersect with the progressive neoliberal reconceptualization of culture as a collection of goods, skills and services that must be properly managed if one is to capitalize on its economic potential.

Course descriptions of public practice required courses:

F532 Public Practice in Folklore and Ethnomusicology: Explores the breadth of professional practice in Folklore and Ethnomusicology outside of college and university settings. Emphasis is placed on the development of conceptual knowledge central to publicly engaged scholarship irrespective of the particular contexts in which scholars might be employed.

F802 Traditional Arts Indiana (TAI): Designed as a practicum for students to work collaboratively in applying the methods and approaches of folklore studies to public needs and public programs. Students will engage in a variety of outreach projects linking the university to the larger community in the areas of public arts and culture and cultural documentation.

F803 Practicum in Folklore/Ethnomusicology: Individualized, supervised work in publicly oriented programs in folklore or ethnomusicology, such as public arts agencies,
museums, historical commissions, and archives. Relevant readings and written report required.

**F805 Laboratory in Public Folklore:** Covers the research, design, creation, presentation, and assessment of public folklore projects. The learning laboratory provides students with experience in the public sector and critical perspectives on the theories, methods, and models employed in this field. The course includes weekly meetings to review readings and resources and discuss project progress.

**F806 Museum Practicum in Folklore:** Folklore-oriented practicum at the Mathers Museum of World Cultures or another museum. Relevant readings, participation, and a capstone event are required.

Public Practice is an important part of the training and employment of both folklorists and ethnomusicologists. "Since 1970, "public folklore" has grown and developed very rapidly in the United States. At the time of this writing, according to the American Folklore Society website, “about half of the American Folklore Society’s members identify themselves as public folklorists”. As can be seen from our alumni job placement lists, the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology has trained students to go on to important positions in public and applied sectors, including, among other important positions, Director of the NEA, Director of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, and representatives to WIPO and UNESCO. In the last decade World Bank, UNESCO, WIPO, NEA and NEH have made the definition, identification, maintenance, protection, and celebration of “cultural heritage” an important mandate. By the nature of our disciplines and our work in public practice, folklorists and ethnomusicologists have been involved in shaping the debates surrounding intangible cultural heritage at all levels of policy.

As can be seen above, our department currently has a growing list of graduate offerings in heritage, tourism, cultural policy and applied and public practice and we have substantial expertise, perhaps the most substantial in the country, in public and applied practice, heritage and museums on our faculty. Our department has two museums specialists, Professors Shukla and Jackson who rotate the teaching of courses on museums and curatorship. Additional museums expertise can be found in our close affiliations with Dr. Steve Stuempfe (Director of Society for Ethnomusicology -SEM), who has a museums background, affiliations with some of the past directors and curators at the Indiana University Art Museum, and with Dr. Eric Sandweiss, a member of the history department specializing in museums, architecture, and historic preservation, who is adjunct in our department. Through the Archives of Traditional Music, the Archives of African-American Music and Culture, the Folklore Archives, the Folklore Collections in the Library, and the Mathers Museum of World Cultures our students are able to get exposure to collections management, archiving, documentation, indexing and production. The department has three applied folklore and ethnomusicology specialists, Dr David McDonald who works on music and violence and music and activism, Dr. Rebecca Dirksen who specializes in music and disasters, and Dr. Diane Goldstein, who specializes in folklore and health, folklore and
law and folklore and violence. Adjunct faculty member, Judah Cohen is a specialist on music and public health and one of the originators of the field of entertainment-education. Numerous members of the faculty provide expertise on cultural domestic and international policy, including Professors Foster and Leon on heritage policy, Professor Jackson on intellectual property, and Professor Goldstein on health policy.

The presence of Traditional Arts Indiana in our department, combined with the appointment of Jason Jackson to the Directorship of the Mather’s Museum, as well as the affiliated resources of the Archives of Traditional Music and the Archives of African-American Music and Culture, mean that we are superbly placed to provide real depth and breadth of experience for our public practice students. In 2013/14 we began exploring participation in both an undergraduate and museum minor, a graduate certificate program, and a fee based MA tied to our museums training. In 2013 we created a joint public folklore exchange program with Western Kentucky University, and began participation in a paid internship program for our students with the Nevada Arts Council. In 14/15 we created a proposal for a dual MA with School of Public and Environmental Affairs’ Arts Administration program based on our public practice training.

Traditional Arts Indiana forms the center of our public folklore and ethnomusicology expertise. TAI identifies, documents, and promotes Indiana’s traditional arts through collaborations with Indiana artists and arts organizations. Founded in 1998, TAI was recognized in 2007 by the Indiana General Assembly as the official statewide folk and traditional arts service organization. TAI trains our students in public folklore and ethnomusicology through hands on work with underserved communities in Indiana emphasizing strategic documentation of traditional arts, innovative public programming, and exemplary interpretation of the state’s folklife and traditional arts resources. Governor Mike Pence recognized the unique contributions made by TAI in fall 2013 when TAI received the Governor’s Arts Award. In recent years IU has become a model for other University/State Arts Agency collaborations. Eleven programs in folklore now house state agencies, following on the successful model of IU’s Folklore and Ethnomusicology Department home for Traditional Arts Indiana.

Traditional Arts Indiana, established in 1998, is the only statewide organization that promotes Indiana’s traditional culture. TAI’s mission has been to: (1) support individual artists and their communities; (2) raise the stature and understanding of Indiana’s traditional arts in the public; (3) build institutional collaborations throughout the arts with educational, municipal, and cultural organizations; (4) set the standard for state traditional arts programming and interpretation; and (5) encourage quality scholarship on Indiana’s traditions. TAI faculty and students actively chronicle Indiana’s arts and artists through interviewing, recording, and photographing individuals and groups throughout the state, documenting their arts and cultural traditions. TAI has created important documentary materials representing more than 1500 artists and cultural specialists from throughout Indiana. TAI champions the arts as part of everyday life, and promotes the merit and value of Indiana’s traditional arts through a variety of public programs, exhibits and educational resources such as documentary videos, websites, and publications. Founded as a partnership between IUB and the Indiana Arts Commission, TAI has developed into a robust
organization of its own, providing meaningful services to the state. No other program in our state actively documents Indiana’s diverse artistic and cultural heritage. TAI archives its materials for public use through an online public archive, and has ensured the long-term preservation of audio, video and photographs of Hoosier artists and craftspeople in Indiana University’s Archives of Traditional Music. TAI has served as a model program for states developing folk arts programs. Active in developing digital tools and resources, TAI has, for example, produced a webinar series to teach a range of skills of relevance to local artists and community leaders, including how to develop a press kit or use Creative Commons licensing. With 40 traveling exhibits that tour free-of-charge to Indiana’s public libraries, TAI provides widespread access to the arts in many underserved parts of our state. From mariachi ensemble Mariachi Zelaya to Serbian luthier Milan Opacich, TAI’s exhibits foster understanding of Indiana’s cultural life. In addition to TAI practicums and laboratory classes, many of our graduate students have served as Graduate Assistants for TAI, learning public practice skills and gaining experience documenting traditions and mounting exhibits. In 2013 we began offering a two year public practice assistantship recruitment package, recruiting one student per year who would enter our graduate program because of the attraction of public practice experience offered through a TAI Assistantship. Through TAI, we are also able to provide public practice experience for undergraduate work study students and interns.

TAI has undergone some changes in the past year. With his PhD now in hand, the Department asked that Jon Kay, Director of TAI, be changed from a Research Scholar to a Professor of Practice, a faculty classification for individuals who have achieved excellence in a field of practice, and who have attained a position of regional, national and even international prominence. Appointments of Professors of Practice are restricted to those who have achieved distinction in their chosen field of practice, and who bring to the University unique practical experiences and talents that will benefit our students. Jon was recruited to the Directorship of TAI in 2004. He came to Indiana University with a deep knowledge of public folklore practice born of having served in a number of key professional roles prior to his appointment, most recently as the folklorist for Florida State Parks and the Director of the Florida Folk Festival (1998-2004). Born and raised in Indiana, Jon was eager to return to his home state and to build up what was then an already thriving program. As professor of Practice Jon Kay is able to serve as coordinator of our Public Practice Concentration, pursue field schools and other new initiatives, and bring his considerable experience to our educational mandate through both in-class and laboratory/practicum teaching.