

University of California, Berkeley
Anthropology 162
Shorena Kurtsikidze
shorena@berkeley.edu

GEORGIAN FOLKLORE

The course

This course views the traditional oral (myths, legends, tales, poetry, songs), customary (folk religion, festivals, dances, “law of love”) and material (architecture, food, costume) culture of different and mostly less known socio-cultural groups and border regions of Georgia. Special emphasis is given to the traditional regional folklore as a peasant culture of the peripheries. The course also presents a history of folklore and ethnographic studies in Georgia. Among different topics, the course discusses how the broadening of anthropological knowledge created a basis for the development of a widespread criticism towards different elements of the traditional life-style, and how this criticism aided a process of innovation of some of the old traditions.

Readings

Required readings include a reader “Georgian Folklore,” Part I (Book Chapters, Articles and Essays, pp. 1-558; abbrev. GF1), and Part II (Folk Narrative Materials, pp.1-511; abbrev. GF2)
There is also a list of suggested readings (see GF2, pp. 507-511).
Most reading assignments will consist of articles and folk narratives.
Additional handouts (abbrev. HO) will be given on selected topics.

Visual materials

Slide shows, ethnographic films, documentaries and movies play important role in this course. Students are encouraged to actively take notes during the lecture and visual presentations.

The Grade

There is no midterm, but discussion on selected topics.
There will be a final paper (6-10 pages; topic of student’s choice) as a home assignment; due date: May 18, 2005.
Students may consult with the instructor about a selection of the topic of their final paper.
Classroom attendance is essential. Questions and participations in classroom discussions are strongly encouraged.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1

Introduction

Georgia; Location. Demography. Linguistic Affiliation. History and Cultural Relations. Settlements. Economy. Kinship. Marriage and Family, Socio-Cultural Organization, Religion and Expressive Culture

Socio-Cultural Groups of Georgia:

Georgians: Megrelians, Svans, Khevsurs, Ajarians, Laz, Meskhetians, Ingilos and others.

Georgian Jews, Abkhazians, Ossets, Armenians, Azerbaijani Turks

Visual Material

Documentary Film "Republic of Georgia," 1997

Readings: GF1, 15-37

Recommended:

Encyclopedia of World Cultures, vol. 4, 1994, by Human Relations Area Files, Inc.

Ajarians, by Nugzar Mgeladze, translated by Kevin Tuite, 12-15

Armenians, by Stephanie Platz, 27-31

Azerbaijani Turks, by Audrey L. Altstadt, 47-51

Chechen-Ingush, by Johanna Nichols, 71-76

Georgian Jews, by Zoia Dzhindzhikhashvili, translated by Dale Pesmen, 126-128

Ingilos, by Nugzar Mgeladze, translated by Kevin Tuite, 149-151

Khevsur, by Achim Schyboll, 93-197

Laz, Robert H. Hewsen, 238-241

Meskhetians, by E.K.Panesh and L.B.Ermolov, translated by Kevin Tuite, 259-262

Mingrelians, by Stephen E. Jones, 262-265

Svans, by Kevin Tuite, 343-347

The New Georgia, Space, Society, Politics, by Revaz Gachechiladze, Texas University Press, 1995, Ethnicity and Religion, 73-98

Week 2

Folklore of Socio-Cultural Groups of Georgia:

Religious Beliefs and Folk Law of Georgian Highlanders

Visual Material

Visual Anthropology and Folklore of the Peripheries: Georgia-Chechnya Border, 1970-1980, Part One

Readings: GF1, 38-55; GF2, 190-215

Georgia's Pankisi Gorge: An Ethnographic Survey, by Shorena Kurtsikidze and Vakhtang Chikovani, Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies, Working Paper Series, University of California, Berkeley, Spring 2002,

Electronic Version: http://repositories.cdlib.org/iseees/bps/2002_03-kurt/

Recommended:

Custom and Justice in the Caucasus: The Georgian Highlanders, a Dissertation in Anthropology, Alexander Grigolia, Philadelphia, 1939

Introduction and Background, 1-5

Crime and Punishment, 140-161

Week 3

Folk Religion and Customs of Highlanders: Archaism and Innovation

Material Culture and Mythology

Georgian Folklore and Literature

Visual Material

Visual Anthropology and Folklore of the Peripheries: Georgia-Chechnya Border, 1970-1980, Part Two

Readings: GF1, 189-201, 365-378, 479-484;

GF2, 392-399, 415, 416-427, 428-468, 469-488, 332-338

Recommended:

A Georgian Reader with Texts, Translation and Vocabulary, Prepared by George Hewitt, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1996

Folk Traditions in Khevsureti, by Sergi Makaltia, 120-129, HO

Folk Traditions in Tusheti, by Sergi Makalatia, 131-149, HO

The Rural Community of Georgian Mountaineers by Ethnographic Materials, by R.L. Kharadze, The 7th International Congress of Anthropological Sciences, Moscow, August 3-10, 1964, Volume 6, Moscow, 1969, 357-362

Week 4

Folk Version of the Feudalism in the Highlands of Georgia

Visual Material

Ethnographic film “Georgia’s Tree of Life,” 1990

Readings: GF1, 171-188, 62-68

Recommended:

Laws of King George V of Georgia, Surnamed “The Brilliant,” Translated by Oliver Wardrop, The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, for the Second Half-year of 1914, 607-626

Settlement as a Basis for the Study of Social Condition, by A.I. Robakidze, The 7th International Congress of Anthropological Sciences, Moscow, August 3-10, 1964, Volume 4, Moscow, 1967, 19-24

The Political Symbolism of Folk Festivals of Georgian Highlanders

Sacrificial Rituals in the Religions of the Highlanders of Caucasus

Milkrelationship in Caucasus

Readings: GF1, 202-216, 217-233, 234-241, 69-78; GF2, 298-299

Recommended:

Festivals and Tradition in the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic, by Juliet Rukhadze and Giorgi Chitaya, from ‘Festivals and Cultures,’ Volume iii, no. 2, 1976, The Unesco and La Baconniere, 68-81

Week 5

“Law of Love” and Love Poetry

Visual Material

Movie as Ethnography: Image of Rural and Urban *Folk - Lower Class* and Their Culture in Georgian Cinema

Episodes from the movie “Tush Shepherd,” 1974

Readings: GF1, 266-280, 281-303, 305-308, 362-365

An Anthology of Georgian Folk Poetry, Translated and Edited by Kevin Tuite, Associated University Presses, Inc., 1994

Love Poems, 118-122, HO

GF2, 361-380

Recommended:

Custom and Justice in the Caucasus: The Georgian Highlanders, a Dissertation in Anthropology, Alexander Grigolia, Philadelphia, 1939
Marriage, 63-89
Sex and Religion, 90-115
Rural Families in Soviet Georgia, A Case Study in Ratcha Province, Tamara Dragadze, Routledge London and New York, 1988
Introduction, 1-17
Kinship and Marriage, 99-133
The Lord of the Panther-Skin, A Georgian Perspective, by A.G. Baramidze, from 'The Lord of the Panther-Skin, A Georgian Romance of Chivalry by Shota Rustaveli,' Translated by R.H. Stevenson, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1977, 221-240

Week 6

Traditions of Verbal Dueling in Rural Georgia

Poetics of Mourning Rituals

Visual Material

Episodes from the silent movie "Salt for Svanetia," 1929

Readings: GF1, 309-321, 322-346

An Anthology of Georgian Folk Poetry, Translated and Edited by Kevin Tuite, Associated University Presses, Inc., 1994

Funerary Poems, 116, HO

Week 7

Georgian Epics:

Amiran-Prometheus

Abesalom and Ether

Arsena's Poem

Visual Material

Visual Anthropology and Folklore of the Peripheries, Part Three, Provinces of Georgia in the Ethnographic Sketches of Nino Brailashvili, 1930-80ies

Readings: GF1, 98-115, 116-117, 118-123, 124-136, 137-146, 147-169, 244-265; GF2, 176-183, 184-199, 339-360

Weeks 8-9

Georgian Folk Tales, Poetry, Charms, Legends and Proverbs

Visual Material

Episodes from the movie "Legend of Surami Fortress," 1983

Readings: GF1, 345-346; GF2, 12-189, 216-252, 311-331, 381-391, 489-506

GF2, 275-299

GF1, 346-361

Week 10

Folk Traditions in West Georgia

Megrelian Folk Tales and Proverbs

Visual Material

West Georgian rural culture in the 17th century drawings of Castelli.

Folk Architecture of the West Georgian Provinces: Ajara, Guria, Imereti, Samegrelo, Abkhazeti, Svaneti, Lechkumi and Ratcha
Readings: GF1, 56-62; GF2, 253-274

Week 11

Religious Beliefs and Oral Folklore of Abkhazians and Ossetians

Visual Material

Movie as Ethnography:

“Wonder Tree,” 1978, Episodes: *medicine man, seeking for miracle stone and magic fish, death on the wonder tree, and punishment for adultery*

Readings: GF1, 392-394, 395-432, 433-435, 436-456, 460-465, 466-477; GF2, 300-310

Recommended:

A Contribution to Abkhaz Lexicography: The Secret Language of the Hunters, by Z.K. Khiba, from ‘Bedi Kartlisa,’ Volume vxxviii, Paris, 1980, 269-277

Male Dress in Caucasus: With Special Reference to Abkhazia and Georgia, by George Hewitt and Zaira Khiba, from ‘Languages of Dress in the Middle East,’ edited by Nancy Lindisfarne-Tapper and Bruce Ingham, Curzon Press, 1997, 93-105

Tengiz Abulaje and Flowering of Georgian Film Art, by Goldie Blankoff-Scarr, Central Asian Survey, Vol. 8, no.3. 1989, 61-86

Week 12

Traditions of Hospitality and Folk Songs of Georgia

Visual Material

Ethnographic film “Wine-press”

Readings: GF1, pp. 79-97

The Social Semiotics of Georgian Toast Performances: Oral Genre as Cultural Activity, by Helga Kotthoff, Journal of Pragmatics 24, 1999, 353-380

Recommended:

A Russian Journal, by John Steinbeck, with Pictures by Robert Capa, The Viking Press, New York, 1948, 150-196

The Georgian Feast: The Vibrant Culture and Savory Food of the Republic of Georgia, by Darra Goldstein, Berkeley, CA/London, 1999, 23-33

Week 13

Georgian Traditional Folk Music and Dance

Visual Material

Documentary film about Georgian folk customs and singing “Phenomenon,” 1992

Documentary film “Bagpipe,” 1990

Documentary “Georgian Folk Dance Ensemble Sukhishvili”

Readings: GF1, pp. 379-393

Recommended

Folk-Lore as the Basis of Modern Georgian Music, by P.V. Khuchua, XXV International Congress of Orientalists, Moscow, 1960, 1-7

Lost Hymns of Georgia, by Pavle Ingorokva, The Unesco Courier, no. 5, May 1962, 24-27

Some Specific Features of Georgian Folk Dance, by E.L. Gvaramadze, The 7th International Congress of Anthropological Sciences, Moscow, August 3-10, 1964, Volume 6, Moscow, 1969, 135-139, HO

Week 14

From the History of Folklore Studies in Georgia (2nd half of the 19th century to present)
The Golden Fleece: Georgian Interpretation of the Classical Myth

Visual Materials

Movie as Ethnography:

Short film "Wine Jar"

"You Will Never See What You Have Seen Before," 1968, Episodes: *urban folk dancing and music*

"Keto and Kote, 1948, Episodes: *Georgian urban folk singing, dancing and music*

Readings: GF1, 485-532, 533-558

Recommended:

The Jason Voyage, the Quest for the Golden Fleece, by Tim Severin, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1985
Georgia, 193 - 213

The Golden Fleece, 214 - 239

Summary of the Text of Apollonius Rhodius, 244 - 259

Mythological Motifs on the Bronze Articles of the Caucasus and Luristan, by M.S. Khidasheli, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im Alten Vorderasien Herausgegeben Von J. Harmatta und G. Komoroczy, Akademia Kiado, Budapest, 1976, 253-261