

Summer 2019

AP/EN 3191 3.0A (S1)

Comedy

Course Director:

Natalia Khomenko
khomenko@yorku.ca
Office: 309 Bethune
Office hours: Wednesday, 1-2 pm

Delivery Format:

Seminar

Time:

Mondays and Wednesdays 2:30-5:30pm

Description:

In the history of English literature, comedy has often been viewed as a “low” genre, unsuitable for dealing with serious matters. Its interest in seemingly insignificant everyday concerns, in the grotesque and embarrassing, and in general hilarity of human interaction has sometimes been interpreted as lack of sophistication and cultural value. To query these assumptions, this course will examine the conventions of comedy and the specific objectives targeted through the use of these conventions. From Chaucer’s famously bawdy “The Miller’s Tale” to Carlin’s stand-up comedy, we will analyze the specific rhetorical devices used in creating humour, engage with a range of theoretical approaches to creating humour, and explore the central themes of comedy – the difficulty of interpersonal relationships, communication failures and social confusion, and the eternal hope for happy endings.

Category:

B

Historical Requirement:

Period I (pre-1700) 3 credits or Period II (1700-1900) 3 credits

Requirements:

Reading responses (2): 15%
Essay proposal: 5%
Research essay: 25%
In-class tests (2): 15%
Final exam: 25%
Participation: 15%

Reading List:

William Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors* (Signet)
Susannah Centlivre, *A Bold Stroke for a Wife* (Broadview).
Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Dover).
Anita Loos, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes: The Intimate Diary of a Professional Lady* (Penguin).
Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (Grove Press)

Open To:

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