

## Summer 2019

### AP/EN 3191 3.0M (S2)

### Comedy

**Course Director:**

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Office: 309 Bethune (in-person meetings by appointment)  
Online contact hours: Wednesday 10-11 am or by appointment  
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**Delivery Format:**

Fully Online

**Time:**

N/A

**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:**

C

**Historical Requirement:**

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

**Requirements:**

Reading responses (2): 20%  
Final essay: 30%  
Take-home test: 15%  
Final exam: 25%  
Online Participation: 10%

**Reading List:**

William Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors* (Signet), OR electronic through York: ed. Charles Whitworth, Oxford University Press, 2002:  
<https://www.library.yorku.ca/find/Record/3133224>  
Susannah Centlivre, *A Bold Stroke for a Wife* (Broadview), OR electronic through York: ed. Nancy Copeland, Broadview, 1995:  
<https://www.library.yorku.ca/find/Record/1548986>  
Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Dover), OR electronic through York: Chadwyck-Healey, 1996 [based on the 1899 edition]:  
<https://www.library.yorku.ca/find/Record/1879138>  
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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