

Summer 2021

AP/EN 3191 3.0 A (SU)	Comedy
Course Director:	Professor Richardine Woodall Office: Zoom Personal Meeting Room e-mail: woodall@yorku.ca Office hours: Wednesday 10:00-11:00
Time:	Asynchronous Web Course Lectures will be released every Tuesday
Delivery Format:	✓ ONLINE – (asynchronous delivery) – There is no set course meeting time. Students may engage with course content/materials 24/7.
Description:	<p>Historically, comedy has a “low” reputation. In the <i>Poetics</i>, Aristotle argues that comedy is an imitation of low characters with some defect or ugliness. Aristotle’s remarks about comedy continue to shape our perception of comedy. In the Western tradition, the cultural practice of producing comedy as well as the critical study of comedy begins with classical Greek theatre. Thus, many comedic plays are on our reading list; these plays range from romantic comedy, dark comedy, city comedy, comedy of manners to comedy of the absurd. Art is a socio-cultural phenomenon, and as western societies have changed so too has comedy. Accordingly, our course considers the manifestation of comedy chronologically from sixteenth through twentieth century plays, in Restoration and Victorian poetry, and in twentieth and twenty-first century prose, cinema and stand-up comedy.</p> <p>Our course questions comedy’s low status as well as such concomitant assumptions that comedy cannot treat serious subjects and that its interests are the trivial and the common. Thus, we study these texts with the following questions in mind. What is comedy? What is the social function of comedy? What value does comedy have, and what values does it produce in our culture? What are our expectations of comedy and are they fulfilled? How are these expectations produced? What are the conditions under which comedy is produced? In order to better answer some of these questions, our course’s reading list also includes a selection of secondary and theoretical texts. Collectively, our readings further our understanding of comedy philosophically, historically, psychologically, and socio-culturally.</p>
Category:	B
Historical Requirement:	N/A
Requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Reading Response Papers: 30% • Major Essay: 30% • Take-Home Final Exam: 20% • 2 Quizzes: 20%
Reading List:	<p>Beckett. <i>Waiting for Godot</i>. Grove Press, 2011. Gay, <i>The Beggar’s Opera</i>. Dover Thrift Edition, 1999. Jonson, <i>Volpone</i>. Penguin, 2004. Shakespeare, <i>A Midsummer Night’s Dream</i>. Pelican, 2016. Shakespeare, <i>Measure for Measure</i>. Pelican, 2017.</p>

	Wilde, <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> . Dover Thrift Edition, 2000. <i>Four Great Restoration Comedies</i> . Dover Thrift Edition, 2005, Films: Hawks, <i>Bringing Up Baby</i> and Raynr, <i>Martin Lawrence: Runteldat</i> Other Readings: available as PDFs
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