

Fall/Winter 2021-2022

AP/EN 3191 3.0 (W)	Comedy
Course Director:	Name: Natalia Khomenko Office: Atkinson 720 e-mail: khomenko@yorku.ca Virtual Office Hours: Thursdays, 5-7 pm
Time:	Wednesday 12:30-2:30 pm Tutorials meet on Wednesday after the lecture.
Delivery Format: (check one)	In person.
Description:	<p>In the history of English literature, comedy has often been viewed as a “low” genre, unsuitable for dealing with serious matters. Comedy’s interest in seemingly insignificant characters and events, as well as in the grotesque and embarrassing aspects of human existence, has sometimes been interpreted as a lack of sophistication and indicator of low cultural value. However, the genre of comedy has historically also been the vehicle for political and social critique and the lens for re-examining the status quo and traditional power hierarchies.</p> <p>Moving chronologically from the late Middle Ages to the 21st century, this course will examine a range of genres that rely on comedy, including poetry, drama, prose fiction, film, and stand-up performance. We will discuss several theories of humour and analyze rhetorical and structural devices used to produce humour. At the same time, we will interrogate the role of comedy in the pursuit of social justice, and ask how laughter might be deployed in achieving social change or, alternatively, in doing harm to marginalized groups. Throughout the semester, we will consider how the readings on the syllabus engage with such urgent themes as class and access to resources; gender and gender roles; race, ethnicity, and nation; sexual desire, identity, and consent; mental and physical health; religious belief.</p>
Category:	B
Historical Requirement:	NA
Requirements:	Short papers: 15% x 2 = 30% Final essay proposal: 5% Final essay: 25% Final exam: 25% Participation: 15%

Reading List:	Textbooks: William Shakespeare, <i>The Comedy of Errors</i> (Signet) William Wycherley, <i>The Country Wife</i> Susannah Centlivre, <i>A Bold Stroke for a Wife</i> (Broadview). Oscar Wilde, <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> (Dover). Anita Loos, <i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes: The Intimate Diary of a Professional Lady</i> (Penguin).
Open To:	Year 3, 4