

**Carleton University
Winter 2015
Department of English**

ENGL 2102A: *Comedy and Satire*
Time: Mon/Wed 11:35 – 12:55
Location: ME 3235 Please confirm on Carleton Central
Office Hours: TBA by appointment
Office: 1913 DT

Instructor: Janne Cleveland
Email: janne.cleveland@carleton.ca

Course Outline:

This course is designed to examine the theory and cultural practices of comedy with an emphasis on satire as a form of social commentary primarily in dramatic literature and essays. We will explore the use of humour; is it only, as Beaumarchais (the creator of the character Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*) has noted, to entice laughter “in order I may not weep”? How does the broad category of comedy differ from the more specific subset of satire? What is the function of laughter? Beginning with the formulations of Greek comedy (c 411 BCE), we will examine various traditions including 17th century moral comedy, commedia d’ell arte, the biting political satire of 18th century England, 19th century Comedy of Manners, down through to the contemporary moment.

Required Texts

Lysistrata (411 BCE) Aristophanes
Volpone (1606) Ben Jonson
A Modest Proposal (1729) Jonathan Swift
Lady Windermere’s Fan (1892) Oscar Wilde
Accidental Death of an Anarchist (1980) Dario Fo
A Man Without a Country (2006) Kurt Vonnegut

Texts available at Haven Books (Seneca and Sunnyside)

Evaluation

Attendance: 10% of your total grade will be based upon your presence and participation in class. Participation means showing up having read the material, and being prepared to contribute to discussion. Marks will be deducted for absenteeism without an accompanying doctor’s note.

Response Paper: (4 – 5 pages): 20%. Choose one text we have studied between the beginning of the term and the end of the first week of February. Using key terms we are studying, provide a close reading and critical analysis of the text. Comment on how the text functions: is it intended

as social commentary, mockery of moral values, or something else? Who is the intended audience? How is social meaning constructed by the author? These are things to consider. This assignment will be due during the week in which the materials you write on are being studied. **NOTE:** Do not wait until the last possible week to submit this assignment, as you will be inundated with assignments from all your other courses at the same time. Early submissions are encouraged.

Thesis Statement & Annotated Bibliography: (5 – 6 pages): 15% **Due: March 2.** Students will present a fully developed thesis that will be the focus of their critical analysis for the term paper. As well, the assignment requires a short paragraph for each of the references being used to support the thesis, summarizing the source briefly and explaining why and how the source contributes to your argument. Use this site to learn more about constructing an annotated bibliography: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/>. Students must use MLA formatting for this assignment. There will be more discussion and direction for this assignment given in class.

One Essay: (8 – 10 pages, **excluding references**): 30% **Due: March 23.** A list of possible topics will be distributed. There will be **NO extensions** given, except in the case of extreme circumstances, and then only when supported by appropriate documentation.

Final Examination: 25% A 3 hour exam will be scheduled by Examination Services. It will consist of a series of passages from the texts studied; you will identify and analyze 10 of these passages.

Late Policy: Assignments must be handed in on the due date at the beginning of class to receive full marks. There will be **no extensions** granted unless discussed prior to the due date with the instructor. In the case where illness prevents a student from submitting an assignment on time, a doctor's not will be accepted. All other late assignments will be penalized **1 mark** per day for up to 7 days, including weekends. No assignments will be accepted if they are more than 7 days late, with the exception of those stated above. **All assignments will be submitted electronically on cuLearn.**

NOTE: It is your responsibility to insure that all assignments are completed and handed in on time. Keep a backup copy that can be submitted upon request at any time.

Reading Schedule

January 5	Introduction
January 7	Lysistrata – Ancient Greek Comedy
January 12	Lysistrata
January 14	Lysistrata
January 19	Volpone – Commedia d’ell Arte
January 21	Volpone
January 26	Volpone
January 28	Volpone
February 2	A Modest Proposal – the art of irony
February 4	A Modest Proposal
February 9	A Modest Proposal
February 11	A Modest Proposal
February 16	Winter Break – no class!
February 18	Winter Break – no class!
February 23	Lady Windermere’s Fan – Comedy of Manners
February 25	Lady Windermere’s Fan
March 2	Lady Windermere’s Fan *Annotated Bib due
March 4	Lady Windermere’s Fan
March 9	Accidental Death of an Anarchist – political satire
March 11	Accidental Death of an Anarchist
March 16	Accidental Death of an Anarchist
March 18	Accidental Death of an Anarchist
March 23	A Man Without a Country **Essay due
March 25	A Man Without a Country – satire in the 21 st c.
March 30	A Man Without a Country
April 1	A Man Without a Country
April 6	Review

NOTE: schedule may be subject to change

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#).

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation.

If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable).

After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the [PMC website](#) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Plagiarism: Plagiarism means passing off someone else's words or ideas as your own or submitting the same work in two different academic contexts (self-plagiarism). The consequences of plagiarism are severe and are issued by the Dean and the University Senate. In order to avoid plagiarism, you must correctly and fairly attribute the sources of the ideas you pick up from books, the internet, and other people. For additional information, consult the section on Instructional Offenses in the *Undergraduate Calendar*.