

Carleton University
Department of English
Fall 2013
ENGL 2102a: Comedy and Satire
Classes: Wednesdays and Fridays 10:05am – 11:25 am
(*please confirm dates and location on Carleton central*)

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Office Hours: TBA
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Course Description:

This course will introduce students to the nature and functions of comedy and humour in a variety of literary genres, including drama, essays, short stories, and novels. Engaging with a range of theoretical discourses related to comedy and satire in literature, we will focus upon the political effects and implications of comedy and satire, situating all texts within their relevant historical and cultural contexts.

Texts:

William Shakespeare, “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” (drama)
Jonathan Swift, “A Modest Proposal” (essay)
Katherine Mansfield, “Miss Brill” (short story)
Flannery O’Connor, “A Good Man is Hard to Find” (short story)
Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange* (novel)
Kurt Vonnegut Jr., *Breakfast of Champions* (novel)
Don Delillo, *White Noise* (novel)

*we will also spend 2 classes watching clips from Jon Stewart’s *The Daily Show* and Stephen Colbert’s *The Colbert Report*

**All novels and the play will be available at *Octopus Books* (116 Third Ave., just west of Bank St.) by the beginning of the semester. All other readings (critical essays and short stories) will be available online at culearn.

GRADING:

Participation and attendance:	10%
Short Essay/Passage Analysis (4-5 pgs):	15%
2 (surprise!) reading quizzes (2 X 5%):	10%
Final Essay (8-10 pages):	25%
Annotated Bibliography:	5%
Final Exam:	35%

PLEASE NOTE:

ENGL 2102 is a writing attentive course. "Writing attentive" means that:

- Students will write at least one examination
- Students will write a minimum of two graded writing assignments per term, in which they are expected to do the following:
 - develop an argumentative thesis across an essay
 - develop complex ideas using correct and effective expression according to academic English practice
 - use and cite evidence from primary texts appropriately
 - develop literary skills through close critical analysis of texts
 - write in accordance with MLA style and documentation guidelines

****Please note:** All assignments must be submitted and the final exam must be written in order to fulfill the course requirements (read: in order to pass the course).

Participation and Attendance: (10%)

While this course is structured as a lecture, your regular attendance at and active participation in the course are required, and account for 10% of your final grade in the course (5% for attendance and 5% for participation). Critical reading and analytical skills cannot be learned from a book alone; therefore, at least half of each class period usually will be devoted to discussions. I expect you to come to class having read the assigned texts and prepared to discuss them in a thoughtful manner. Attendance will be taken at each class, and absences will be noted.

ESSAY #1: Short Essay/Passage Analysis (4-5 pages) (15%)

DUE: Friday, October 11, 2013

For this assignment, you are required to submit a critical analysis and close reading of a passage from one of our primary texts. Paying close and detailed attention to the language, symbols, imagery, narrative perspective, style, tone, and themes of the passage, examine the significance of the passage to the larger themes of the text. Your analysis should present a thesis statement that offers a basic observation or assertion about the passage itself and/or its relation to the text as a whole. Your interpretation may take any direction you would like, but your assertions must be supported by detailed reference(s) (ie. direct quotes from the text) to the passage you are analyzing. Secondary sources are NOT to be consulted for this assignment; I am interested in reading your specific and personal interpretation. Handwritten responses will NOT be accepted. Topic questions will be assigned at least 2 weeks in advance, and you will be able to choose ONE out of three passages.

FINAL ESSAY: (30%) (25% for the essay; 5% for an annotated bibliography)

Due: Friday, November 29, 2013

The final essay, **due on Friday, Nov. 29**, is to be 8-10 pages in length, and must be written in accordance with the Modern Language Association (MLA) style and documentation guidelines. If you are unfamiliar with MLA guidelines, please consult or purchase the MLA Handbook for

Writers of Research Papers (6th edition), several volumes of which are available at Carleton's library at LB2369.G52. Your essay may focus upon any topic related to the course that interests you, however, you must write on at least ONE but no more than TWO primary texts (novels, short stories, and/or plays) and must consult at least 3 secondary/critical sources. Essay topics will be assigned at least four weeks in advance. Topics will cover the major themes and subjects of the course, but I strongly encourage students to develop their own essay topics. If you wish to choose your own topic, you must consult with me and receive my permission in writing **at least two weeks before the due date**. All essays must be double spaced and formatted with 12 pt Times New Roman font and one-inch margins. Handwritten essays **WILL NOT** be accepted. Essays will only be accepted as printed hard copies submitted in class or to the English Department assignment drop box (18th floor Dunton Tower). Essays that are emailed, mailed, faxed or sent in any other fashion will not be accepted.

Late Policy:

Late papers will be penalized **5% per day**, including weekends, and extensions will NOT be granted except in cases of bereavement or serious illness, accompanied by a doctor's note. If you are in a situation that warrants an extension, please speak to me as early as possible. Extensions that are requested on or after the due date will not be considered.

Plagiarism:

There will be a policy of ZERO TOLERANCE for plagiarism. The Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar defines plagiarism as "pass[ing] off as one's own idea, or product, work of another without expressly giving credit to another." Plagiarism is a form of serious academic dishonesty, and the consequences are severe. All suspected cases of plagiarism must be forwarded by me to the Deans' offices, who will then meet with students to determine the merits of the claim as well as potential academic consequences. Please refer to the statement on Institutional Offences in the CU Undergraduate Calendar for more information.

Final exam (35%): will be written during the scheduled fall term examination period in December (date TBD), and will cover all material studied throughout the entire course. The exam format will be given to students prior to the exam, and our last class will be devoted to review and exam preparation.

Note: If one of your assignments is lost, misplaced, or not received by the instructor, you are responsible for having a backup copy that can be submitted immediately upon request.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS, COURSE POLICIES, and CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:

Students are expected to:

- attend all classes, showing up on time and staying for the duration of the class and bringing with them the text(s) assigned for that day's class. I will not share my lecture notes with students, nor will I give lectures twice, so it is the responsibility of students to get the notes they have missed from another student
- have read the assigned material for that day and be prepared to discuss the texts in a thoughtful manner. Critical reading, writing and analytical skills cannot be learned from a book alone, and asking questions about the readings and contributing to class discussions will undoubtedly help you to better understand the material and hone your critical reading and interpretative skills

-take notes during my lectures and class discussions about the texts: the final exam will be based on lectures and issues raised during class discussions, so it is important that you take good notes summarizing the important points raised during class

-use CULearn on a regular basis so that you are up to date with any readings, assignments, handouts, or announcements that are posted. I cannot stress how important it is that students use the resources provided for them on CULearn

-(This is my personal pet peeve, so I strongly recommend you familiarize yourself with this policy):**

Please ensure that you turn off all cell phones, mp3 players, and other electronic equipment BEFORE class begins. It is incredibly disrespectful, distracting and frustrating for professors to watch students send and receive text messages during lectures, and students who are caught using their cell phones will be asked to leave class. Laptop computers are to be used ONLY to take lecture notes, and any student who is caught using the computer to play games, go on Facebook, watch videos on youtube, check email, surf the internet, and/or any other activity that is not related to taking notes will be asked to leave the class. If such issues are a common problem, only students with PMC approved laptops will be able to bring them to class. Please show respect to both your professor and fellow students.

-Email etiquette (another of my pet peeves): Please remember that you are writing to your professor, and not your best friend, or your sister, or your mother. Please do not use “text speak” and instead use proper English language; please do not sign your emails with hearts, “xox” or short forms of your name, and please do not begin your email with phrases such as “Yo Prof.” Please remember that I have literally hundreds of students each semester, as I teach at 2 different institutions, and so it is important that you: a) Identify yourself by your FULL name and indicate which class you are in in the title of your message b)Keep your emails extremely brief, focused only on the reading material or other questions that are directly related to the course, and c) Ensure that you have fully read this syllabus and all documents posted to CULearn before sending an email; I frequently receive emails from students asking questions whose answers are provided on documents that are easily accessible to you online.

And in return, you can expect from me:

-A willingness to help you improve your reading, writing, and analytical skills, and ultimately, your success in the course. Please remember, however, that this is a two-way street. If you need help with an assignment or have questions about or problems with any aspect of the course or with the reading material, please let me know as soon as possible.

-The best way to get in contact with me is by email at esther_post@carleton.ca

-I will respond to emails in a timely fashion (usually within 48 hours, though it could be longer on weekends) and especially to those that ask clear, precise and specific questions.

-I am also available to meet with students to discuss any aspect of the course during my office hours, and if you are unable to make it to my office hours, we can reschedule a time to meet that is convenient to both of us.

-In the unlikely event that I need to cancel a class due to illness, personal/family emergency, etc., I will do my best to post an announcement as soon as possible to CULearn. It's a good idea to check online for such announcements before coming to class, but if you can't check, such announcements will be posted to the classroom door.

For Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that I receive your letter of accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC.

For Religious Observance:

Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious observance should make a formal, written request to their instructors for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved.

Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Students or instructors who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton's Academic Accommodation policies, or may contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department for assistance.

For Pregnancy:

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a letter of accommodation. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Reading Schedule (*subject to change):

Fri., Sept. 6: Introduction to course; review of course syllabus

Wed., Sept. 11: Introduction to theories of and key terms related to comedy and satire

F. Sept. 13: William Shakespeare, "A Midsummer Night's Dream"

W. Sept. 18: "A Midsummer Night's Dream"

F. Sept. 20: "A Midsummer Night's Dream"

W. Sept. 25: Jonathan Swift, "A Modest Proposal"

F. Sept. 27: "A Modest Proposal"

W. Oct. 2 Katherine Mansfield, "Miss Brill"

F. Oct. 4: "Miss Brill"

W. Oct. 9: Flannery O'Connor, "A Good Man is Hard to Find"

F. Oct. 11: "A Good Man is Hard to Find" ****PASSAGE ANALYSIS DUE****

W. Oct. 16: Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange*

F. Oct. 18: *A Clockwork Orange*

W. Oct. 23: *A Clockwork Orange*

F. Oct. 25: *A Clockwork Orange*

W. Oct. 30: NO CLASSES

F. Nov. 1: NO CLASSES

W. Nov. 6: Kurt Vonnegut Jr., *A Breakfast of Champions*

F. Nov. 8: *A Breakfast of Champions*

W. Nov. 13: *A Breakfast of Champions*

F. Nov. 15: Don DeLillo, *White Noise*

W. Nov. 20: *White Noise*

F. Nov. 22: *White Noise*

W. Nov. 27: *White Noise*

F. Nov. 29: Jon Stewart and *The Daily Show* ****FINAL ESSAY DUE**

W. Dec. 4: Stephen Colbert, *The Colbert Report* and Colbert Nation

F. Dec. 6: **LAST CLASS:** Course review and final exam prep