



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Shakespearean Comedy - 44305

Last update 20-09-2021

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: English

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Prof. Tzachi Zamir

Coordinator Email: tzachi.zamir@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Thursday 13:00-14:00

Teaching Staff:

Prof Tzachi Zamir

Course/Module description:

The course is designed to sharpen your ability to analyze and respond more fully to humor by focusing on Shakespeare's comedies. Apart from Shakespeare's comedies, reading material includes material from the philosophy of comedy.

Course/Module aims:

Identifying comic structures, familiarization with philosophical issues relating to humor, deepening response to and knowledge of Shakespeare.
Students will also specialize throughout the course in a single comedy.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

Analyze structural aspects of humor, evaluate comic performance, identify political and philosophical aspect of comedy.

Attendance requirements(%):

80%

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Lecture, discussion, and group work on a particular comedy

Course/Module Content:

1 Class (14/10):

1) The "anti-comic" beginning (LLL: I.i, TN: I.i, MOV: I.i, MFM: I.i)

2 Class (21/10):

1) Discrepancies in knowledge (COE: III.i+ii, TN: III.iv),

2) Optional reading: B. Evans, "Here Sit I in the Sky").

T. Zamir, "Why Does Comedy Give Pleasure?" [Perusall – to be completed by 4/11]

X Pairs assigned and a comedy chosen for collaborative essay

3 Class (28/10): Special class in Mirror Room

-
- 1) *Disguise* (MW: IV.ii, AYLI: III.v, MOV trial scene: IV.i)
 - 2) *Stanislavski, from Building a Character*

X Reading together the comedy

4 Class (4/11):

- 1) *Tragic vs. Comic recognition*
(King Lear: IV.vi, Othello: V.ii, LLL: IV.iii, AWEW: IV.iii, MND: III.ii)
- 2) *Optional reading: Selection from The Name of the Rose, Umberto Eco.*

X Watching a production and uploading a critical observation (500-700 words – 5 % of grade for collaborative work)

5 Class (11/11):

1. *Twins, identity, and self-knowledge* (COE, TN—no readings, but the theme of twins in both plays will be discussed)

Ruth Nevo's "Shakespeare's New Comedy" [Perusall – complete by 25/11]

X Submitting first draft of a research question for joint essay (3% of grade for collaborative work)

6 Class (18/11): *Special class in Teatron Hachenyon:*

- 1) *What is a comic "hero"?* (H4i: I.i; II.iv; V.i+ii, H4ii: IV.i; V.v)
- 2) *Optional reading: D. Wilson's The Fortunes of Falstaff*

7 Class (25/11):

- 1) *Eaves-dropping scenes* (LLL: IV.iii, TN: II.v, MA: II.iii; III.i and Troilus & Cressida: V.ii)

8. Class (2/12)

- 1) *Comedy, social stratification, and upward mobility* (TN: II.v, TS: IV.i, AWEW: I.i+iii)
- 2) *Noble vs. Ignoble characters* (MFM, H4i –theme discussed)
- 3) *Optional reading: Andrew Stott: 'Comedy in the Academy', pp. 17-38 in Comedy*

Bakhtin's Rabelais and His World [Perusall – complete by 16/12]

9 Class (9/12):

1) The war of the sexes (MW, AYLI- No specific reading, discussion of the theme in the play)

X Submitting three secondary sources (2% of overall grade for collaborative essay)

10 Class (16/12): Special class in Teatron Hachenyon:

1) Gender politics continued (TS: V.ii)

11 Class (23/12):

1) Comedy in tragedy (Macbeth: II.iii, Antony and Cleopatra: V.ii)

2) Optional reading: Bradley on Macbeth's porter.

X Uploading a short abstract regarding one of the secondary sources and a critical reflection (500 words – 5 % of overall grade for collaborative essay)

12 Class (30/12):

X Class presentations of collaborative essay & discussion (10% of overall grade for collaborative essay)

13 Class (6/1): Special class in Teatron Hachenyon:

1) What is a Fool? (TN: I.v, King Lear: I.iv)

E. Welsford, The Fool [Perusall – complete by 13/1]

14 Class (13/1):

1) Tragedy in comedy and comic loss

(TN: IV.ii, MAAN: II.iii, AWEW: IV.iii)

Required Reading:

See above

Additional Reading Material:

See subject list above, though subject to change.

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %

Presentation 0 %

Participation in Tutorials 0 %

Project work 0 %

Assignments 20 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 80 %

Quizzes 0 %

Other 0 %

Additional information:

Collaborative work on a specific comedy (in pairs) will lead to your final paper and will make up 80% of the grade.

Instructions regarding the work process, which itself constitutes parts of the grade for the paper, will be given.

An additional 20% of the grade will be made up of social reading via Perusall (to be explained in class).